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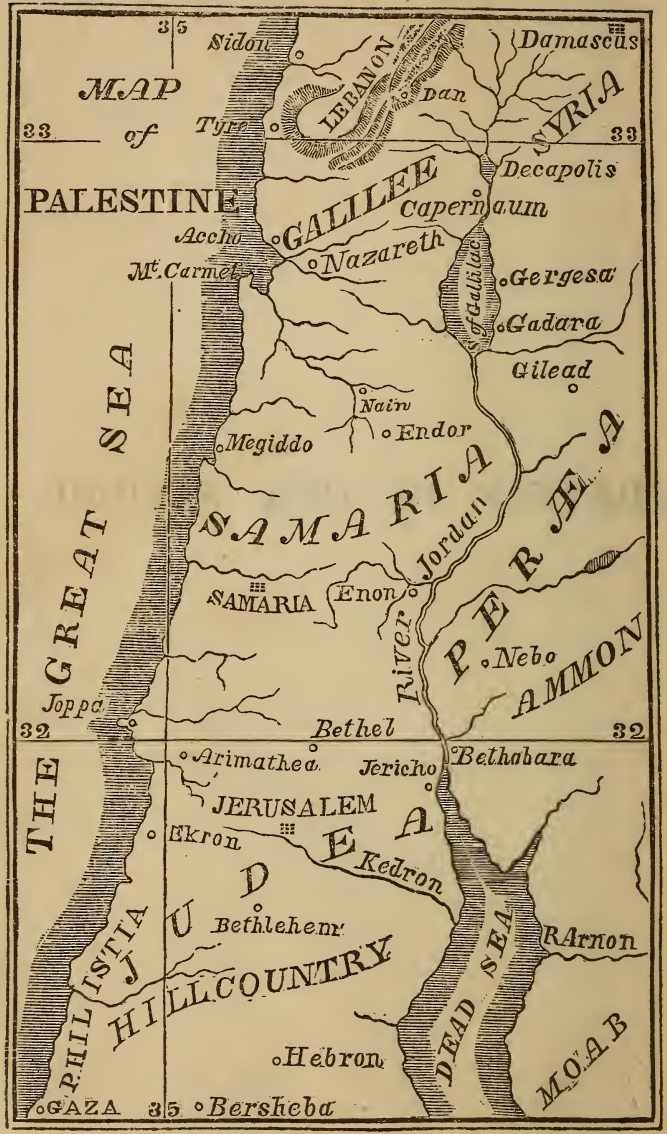
TRAVELS OF OUR SAVIOUR.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TRAVELS

OF

OUR SAVIOUR,

WITH SOME OF THE

LEADING INCIDENTS OF HIS LIFE.

BY WILLIAM A. ALCOTT.

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Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and revised by the Committee of Publication

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PREFACE.

The writer of the following pages is not wholly ignorant of the difficulty—not to say danger—connected with the preparation of a volume which brings into view, in any way, the character of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Even with the aid of the best harmonies, it is not easy always to be certain in regard to the true order of many incidents and events; although, so far as this order is of acknowledged importance, it is a case in which error should be particularly avoided. The writer hopes, however, that he has not, either in this respect or in any other, fallen into any material error. He hopes that the work will be of great service to the young, not only as a harmony of the gospels, but as a kind of introduction to the character of our Saviour. He hopes and trusts that while they

thus behold his glory, they may, through the influence of his Spirit, be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory.

It is, indeed, in this latter particular that he considers this work chiefly valuable. If it fail to be serviceable here, then will it come greatly short of its chief end, and the author's main intention. He has written it, in one word, to lead the youthful mind and heart, not only to the knowledge, but also to the love of the Holy Scriptures, and of the character of their divine Author.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to anticipate, in this place, what is said in the introductory chapter, that the present volume does not make the high claim of being a complete *life* of the Saviour. As might be inferred from the title itself, it embraces only the principal incidents of his life. A complete list of these, in detail, is believed to be unnecessary, in the present work; first, because it would be likely to disturb too much the order of the narrative, and secondly, because many other writers have performed the service of presenting them already. In short, the great and leading object is to introduce our

Saviour to the youthful reader, as a man,—as a traveler through the world,—living, speaking and acting like other men; only that in all things he was without sin, while of others there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.

Children too often read the sacred writings,—and the life of our Saviour among the other portions of them,—as they are accustomed to read fiction or romance. Thousands seem not to realize that the Saviour was a man, and had the feelings, and temptations, and trials of men; that he walked, ate, drank, and slept like other men; in a word, that, in addition to his divine nature, he had a complete human nature, being in all respects as we are, except that he was without sin. To render solid, substantial and *real* what appears to them more or less dreamy or unreal; to enlist more fully their sympathies with him who *lived* as well as *died* for them; to form their characters on the model of his, and thus to aid, ultimately, in their conversion and sanctification, are, be it repeated, the leading objects of the work. With this view, after repeated solicitations from many friends of the religious education of the young, the author undertook to prepare the work; and with

this he now presents it to the public, in the earnest hope and prayer that it may prove a means of leading the rising generation to "glorify God" our Saviour "in their bodies and spirits, which are his."

DEDHAM, JANUARY, 1840.

TRAVELS OF OUR SAVIOUR.

INTRODUCTION.

All mankind are travelers, my young friends—you and I among the rest. All are traveling towards death, towards the judgment, towards eternity. From the cradle to the grave there is no resting-place whatever. The journey of life may be said to be going on even while we sleep. Every hour, yes, every moment, our march is onward; for every hour and every moment bring us nearer to the end of our course. It is true we seem to pursue many different roads; some broader, others more narrow; some thorny, others more pleasant; some longer, others shorter. Nevertheless they all end at the valley of the shadow of death, and all travelers must cross that dark valley.

Beyond this valley, how numerous soever have been the roads by which we have traveled through the world, there are but two places of abode—two countries prepared for our reception. However varied our tastes, whatever may be our likes or our dislikes, however diversified may seem to be the shades of character we possess, we shall be found to form (as we always have done in reality in all our journeyings this side of it) but two classes of persons—the one loving good or holiness, the other loving evil or sin; the one the followers of God our Saviur, the other the followers of the "devices and desires" of our own hearts, and of Satan the grand adversary; the one the inhabitants of heaven, a city which hath foundations, a glorious city, whose builder and maker is God, the other the inhabitants of hell, the pit which is bottomless, the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone whence the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.

I have said that one of these classes of human travelers—the lovers of holiness—are the followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yes, my dear young friends, our Saviour, like you and me was once a traveler.

Though he had a home, a mansion in the heavens,—though he was the Father's only begotten son and was tenderly beloved by the Father, yet did he consent to journey through this world —this wilderness world, as some call it—that he might set a glorious example, as well as accomplish for us and others still higher and nobler objects. Thirty and three years, or not far from this period, did he continue his toilsome pilgrimage, and that too over a road more difficult than falls to the lot of any of his most careful and studious followers, ere he came to the end of his journey; and then that end was by treachery and violence; a violence almost unparalleled in the history of man; a violence which should and probably does make us all shudder; accompanied as it was by the hiding of his Father's face, which was more to be endured than all besides.

You have read the Saviour's travels, as I trust, in the New Testament. I propose to you, as truth, nothing which cannot be found there. I have, however, supposed it might be useful to persons of your age to become acquainted with those travels, by themselves, *as* travels; and in their natural order. I have not attempted to give a complete account of

every thing which was acted and transacted during the various and numerous journeyings of our Saviour, but only of such things and events as were intimately connected with these journeyings and as are most striking. To get a complete history of his life you must study, for yourselves, the book I have mentioned—the New Testament—together with those parts of the Old Testament which throw light on the same subject, especially the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

You may also find it useful, in some measure, to study a few of the books which uninspired men have written about him. There are several volumes, larger and smaller, called "the Life of Christ," which are very good. But, I repeat it, the best Life of Christ as a whole—by far the best—is to be found in the New Testament, to which I must refer you, not only for an account of his life, in general, but even of his travels.

If the perusal of this little volume shall not have the effect to make you love that great source of information—the Bible—better than before; if it shall not lead you to study the character and life of Jesus Christ with deeper interest, and to endeavor to walk as he

walked; thinking, speaking, acting and living as he did, more than ever before, then will it fail of its great object, and the writer will have labored in vain.

But he hopes better things of you, and "things which accompany salvation," as an apostle would say, though he thus speaks. After you have perused carefully these chapters, he hopes that the various chapters of the Bible—and especially those of the Gospels of our Lord and Saviour—will become, more than they ever were before, a light to your feet, and a lamp to your paths, to guide you on through this wilderness world, till you reach the heavenly Canaan, the new Jerusalem, the city of our God; till you sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, yes, and with the Saviour himself, in the kingdom of eternal bliss, to go no more out, for ever and for ever.

CHAPTER I.

The Saviour born a traveler—Is first known at Bethlehem—Journey to Egypt—Return to Palestine—Journey to Nazareth—He resides there.

The Saviour of mankind was, as it were, born a traveler. Leaving the bosom of that Father with whom he had resided before the world was, and descending to this lower world, the first intelligence we have of him is his birth at Bethlehem. But he was born a traveler in another respect. Joseph and Mary, his earthly parents, were on a journey at the very time of his birth. Their usual residence was at Nazareth, about eighty miles northward of the city of Bethlehem; but having occasion to go to Bethlehem, at this time, the Saviour was born while they were sojourning there. So that in two respects at least, was he born a traveler; away from his native home.

But he was not only born a traveler, he continued such. Though descended from obscure parents, cradled in a manger because the inns at Bethlehem were all occupied, and

scarcely known to any individual but his own parents, a most singular and remarkable life was before him. There was a tradition and belief abroad at this time, among his countrymen, the Jews, that a personage was then about to appear among them, who should become their king.

It is true they had a king already, but they did not like him very well. Moreover they were tributary to, that is, under the Romans; and their new king, it was expected, would set them free.

After Jesus was born, it was soon noised about among his countrymen, the Jews, that he was to be the new king. The intelligence of course, reached Herod, the reigning monarch, and gave him great offence. He could not bear the idea of a rival.

What then should he do? He was a cruel prince, and did not hesitate to do almost any thing that would be likely to accomplish his purposes. He did not care so much what was just and good and right, as he did to secure his own selfish aims and purposes. His mind was soon made up. The young king, the child Jesus, must be slain.

I have said of Herod that he did not long

hesitate to do whatever he thought would be likely to effect his purpose. He who could entertain murder in his heart, would not be likely to regard truth in his statements. He lived in Jerusalem. Bethlehem, where the infant Saviour was born, was five or six miles south of Jerusalem. Herod, therefore, under pretence of friendship—yes, and piety too—requested certain wise men, or Magi, who were going to Bethlehem, to find out in what part of the city Jesus was, and bring him word that he might go and worship him. Wretched old king! Was it not enough that thou shouldst harbor murder in thine heart, without attempting to cover it with the mantle of piety?

But the messengers did not bring him the word he desired. That God who watches over the sleeping infant, as well as the waking adult, and whose own eye never needs either sleep or slumber, would not fail to take care of his well-beloved Son. He made known to the messengers his will that they should not return to Jerusalem to give information to Herod; and like good and true men they ventured to obey the King of heaven rather than the king at Jerusalem.

In the mean time, however, another thing was to be done. Herod's jealousy and cruelty were not at all abated by the neglect of the wise men to return to him; and there was no certainty that he would let the matter rest where it was. It was necessary therefore that the child Jesus should be removed beyond the reach of his cruelty.

Accordingly a command from Heaven came to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, to go away with him and his mother, immediately, to Egypt, and remain there till the danger was over, or at least till permission was granted them to return.

The reasons, moreover, were given, why his flight was necessary. God deals with his children somewhat as wise earthly parents do with theirs; sometimes giving the reasons for what he does and sometimes not doing it. Happy is the individual, however, who promptly and immediately obeys the commands of a parent, whether an earthly or an heavenly one, whether any reasons for them are assigned or not.

The parents of Jesus did not hesitate. First, they wished to obey God. Secondly, they loved their children tenderly.

They would be especially careful and tender of so young a child as Jesus. They would no doubt submit, on his account, to almost any privation. Thirdly, they seem to have had some notions, confused ones though they were, of his future greatness. They probably thought he would, at least, become a distinguished prophet.

Egypt, as perhaps you know, lay southwestward of Palestine, on the borders of Africa. In those early times the journey from Bethlehem to Egypt was rather formidable. The roads through the country were very far from being as good as our roads are, nor were they so easily followed. Indeed it can hardly be said, in strictness of language, that there were any roads at all from Palestine to Egypt ; the country being a sandy desert, in which good roads cannot be built, at least without a very great deal of trouble and expense.

Moreover, if Joseph and Mary and the infant Saviour commenced their journey in the month of February, as seems to me most likely (though by no means certain), neither the weather nor the traveling was favorable. True, the severest part of the winter was over; but there were still occasional snows,

and frequent rains, as well as sudden changes from heat to cold. Whether they walked or rode, it must, therefore, have been very bad traveling. The aspect of the country at this season, was, moreover, in all probability rather dreary; though the eye of the traveler in Palestine is usually relieved in the latter part of February—and perhaps this was the season in which the journey was made—by the sight of peach blossoms, and occasionally by the blossoms of the apple-tree.

The distance from Bethlehem to Egypt was also considerable. We do not indeed know to what part of Egypt they retired; but we may reasonably suppose they made a journey of something like 150 or 200 miles; which, under the circumstances of which I have been speaking, was no trifling journey, even for those who were better able than Joseph and Mary to bear the expense of it.

How long they staid in Egypt, is not said. Some suppose it was a few months only; others think it was six or seven years. To me it seems most likely it was, only a few months, or at most a year.* He remained

* There is a class of men in our country, as you know, who disbelieve or profess to disbelieve the Bible, and are hence called in-

there in any event until the death of Herod, the cruel king at Jerusalem of whom I have already spoken; which came to pass soon afterwards. Not, however, till this same Herod had issued a most severe and wicked decree and seen it executed. For so it was, that on finding the wise men by whom he sent to find out about Jesus did not return to tell him where the young Jesus was, and that his hypocritical purpose was likely to be discovered, he determined on destroying his supposed young rival; and not knowing his age, exactly now, he sent forth executioners and caused all the children in the neighborhood of Bethlehem under their second year* to be

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fidels. These men, it is true, generally profess to think well of the character of Christ. One of them, however, in conversation with a Sabbath school teacher, told him that Christ was a kind of magician, and that he learned his magical arts in Egypt where, as he said, he was brought up. It was sufficient to confute this, for the young teacher to turn to Luke, fourth chapter, where it says; And he came to Nazareth *where he had been brought up*, &c. The infidel was silent, concluding no doubt that he could not have been brought up in two countries at once.

* I have said under their second year, because it was the custom of the Jews in speaking of the age of a person to include the year on which he had entered. Thus Jesus was baptized when he began to be about 30 years of age, that is, as soon as he was 29, and a little over. A person 20 years old and only one day over would be reckoned 21 years old. So when the Bible says Herod slew all the children in the neighborhood of Bethlehem, "from

put to death. Had not Jesus been preserved, by being ordered by the heavenly mandate into Egypt, he too must, to human view, have shared the same fate with the rest.

But kings do not live always, any more than other men, especially wicked. According to the Bible, the wicked, whether high or low, "do not live out half their days." Herod though not yet an old man, was unexpectedly to himself called away to meet his final judge and wait his award, whether prepared or unprepared to receive it.

When Herod was dead, a voice from heaven communicated the intelligence to our sojourners in Egypt, and directed them to return into Palestine, or, as it was then called, the land of Israel. Glad, no doubt, to obey the summons, and supposing, as it would seem, that since the child was born in Bethlehem, he ought to be educated there, they bent their course thither.

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two years old and under," I suppose it means all who had entered at all upon their second year. It does not make him the less cruel perhaps to *prove*, if we could do it, that what I have supposed here was really the fact; for he was cruel enough in any case; but we should be willing and glad to do every body justice, even king Herod. Moreover, we should be glad to understand every thing just as it ought to be understood, especially the Bible.

Herod, however, had been succeeded in the government by his son Archelaus, who proved to be almost as cruel as the father, for no sooner had he obtained the consent of the Romans to reign over that part of the country where his father had lived, than, according to the best historians, he massacred 3,000 Jews in the temple on a single day.

How Joseph obtained a knowledge of his cruelty, we know not, or whether he knew it, in fact, at all, is uncertain. In any event, he judged that the son of Herod could hardly be a good man, and that he would almost inevitably carry out all the purposes of his father.* Accordingly he did not return to Bethlehem, nor into that part of the country where Bethlehem and Jerusalem are situated, but passed on northward into Galilee; and finally concluded to return once more to his former residence at Nazareth.

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* One of the more striking marks of difference between good and bad men consists in the disposition of which I am here speaking. Good men—kings as well as others—are ready to forgive; bad men are apt to revenge. Savages you know, seek revenge, even down to many generations after the existence of the generation which injured them; that is, they will be as apt to kill the grandson for the deeds of the grandfather as to kill the grandfather himself. How dreadful such revenge! And how thankful ought we to be for a religion which, like that of Christ, encourages forgiveness even in death.

This was quite a long journey; nearly a hundred miles longer than the former. At what season it was performed, or under what particular circumstances, we have now no means of ascertaining. If the infant Jesus was not a year old, the scenery, humanly speaking, was nothing to him; but if he was several years old, he was prepared to take no little interest in beholding the places and objects which were passed. Much of the route must have been rather uninteresting to the traveler, except that a soil highly cultivated almost every where, especially after they got fairly out of Egypt, would be always likely to afford delight to persons brought up, as Joseph and Mary probably had been in the country.

Of the travels of Jesus any farther till he was twelve years of age, we know very little. He appears to have staid at home with his parents; and it is generally supposed that he worked with his father, at the carpenter's work. His father, like other pious Jews, is believed to have gone, once or more every year, to Jerusalem, at feast times, but whether Jesus, in his earliest years, ever went with him, is more doubtful. To me, from the

Scripture account of him, it appears highly probable he did not.

The most we know of Jesus with certainty, during this period is, that he lived with his parents and was obedient to them; and that he attended every Sabbath, the religious worship of the synagogue. Synagogues in those days were very numerous, in all cities where there were Jews. Hardly a town or village, even of those which were small as Nazareth, that had not at least one of them; and some had many. Jerusalem alone, not far from this time, is said by some historians to have had no less than 480 of them; but whether this statement is or is not wholly true, the number was certainly very great.

CHAPTER II.

The Feasts at Jerusalem—Feast of the Passover—Journey thither—What was to be seen on the road—His adventure in the temple—His conduct there—Return to Nazareth with his parents.

I have already said that I suppose our Saviour's first journey to Jerusalem was not performed until he was twelve years of age.

Some suppose otherwise, however. Certain it is that at this time he made a journey thither, in company with his parents.

The law of God required all the male Israelites, after they were twelve years of age, to appear three times a year in the temple in Jerusalem; to be present at the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of the Passover. Joseph and Mary felt especially bound to attend the latter feast, and though the distance was about 75 or 80 miles, and they were poor, and probably walked, it does not appear that they ever failed of attending to this part of their duty.

The Feast of the Passover was kept in the fifteenth day of the month Nisan, which, as I understand it, would be the 26th of our March.* It lasted eight days, and was designed, as you probably know, to keep in remembrance the great mercy of God, in passing over the Israelites in Egypt, and leaving them unharmed, while the first-born of the Egyptians were all destroyed; of which you will, of course, find a full account in the book of Exodus.

* Some, however, incline to think it must have been the 2d of April.

The journey to Jerusalem must have been rather pleasant than otherwise. If it was the first time the Saviour went far from home after he was old enough to observe men and things and make his own reflections upon them, it must have been to him a most delightful excursion. The almond, apricot, and peach trees had blossomed some time before, but the pear, the fig and the palm trees,—and the apple trees where there were any—were now in full bloom. The trees of the fields and of the forests were covered with their rich foliage. Beans and peas were ripe enough for gathering. In the garden might be seen flourishing the artichoke, rosemary, fennel, sage, thyme, &c. The latter rains, however, were occasionally falling, and the ground, in consequence, was muddy, though the rains usually ceased about the end of the Passover, so that the walking homeward was much better. When the rain is not falling, at this season, the weather in Palestine is usually warm and sometimes hot, attended with thunder storms and hail; and there are occasional tornadoes and earthquakes at this season, also strong floods. Still, as I have already said, these last being rare, journeying, at this season, is usually pleasant.

I must speak of our Saviour, in these his travels, as I would of any other traveler, for he was human as well as divine; and at this early age, and indeed at every age, he must be supposed to have had human thoughts and feelings and passions (bad ones excepted), and among the rest, human curiosity. I cannot doubt that as a young man he delighted to see objects on the road, as he and his parents passed along to Jerusalem. I have made this apology for once, that in speaking of the Saviour as a traveler, I may not seem to my young readers to be irreverent; and I hope this remark may be continually borne in mind.

As there were no canals or steamboats or railroads in those days nor any stage coaches, travelers on the road from Nazareth to Jerusalem, as elsewhere, were compelled to proceed slowly. If they rode on horseback, they must have been at least two days in performing the journey; but if they traveled on foot, which is more probable, they might be on the road three days or more.

What then would they see, new and curious, on the road? What mountains, rivers, lakes, cities, villages; and what natural or artificial

curiosities? What sort of people; what manners and what customs; what animals—birds, beasts, &c.?

If they passed through Samaria, which was the nearest route to Jerusalem—and I suppose they did—at their first setting out from Nazareth for Jerusalem, they must have crossed the valley of Jezreel. This was a distance of twelve or fifteen miles; after which the road is chiefly hilly.

And yet, although hilly, it can scarcely be called mountainous. Mount Carmel must have appeared some twenty-five miles distant, at the west, on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, having its top about 1,500 feet, or a quarter of a mile above the level of the water. On the northern side of the plain, to the east of the road by which they had descended from the mountain of Nazareth, stood Mount Tabor with the snows of the lofty Hermon, at a much greater distance beyond it. But to the sight of these Jesus had always been accustomed, so that, though they were seen more distinctly in crossing the plain of Jezreel, they would not therefore present any thing very new. Beyond Samaria, on the east side of the city of Sychar or Shechem, are

the famous mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, where the curses of the law on certain wicked characters were pronounced; and it was on mount Gerizim that the Samaritan temple was built, in opposition to the temple of the true God at Jerusalem.

There were no rivers on the road worth mentioning; nor any seas or lakes fairly in sight. The Mediterranean was some twenty or thirty miles off, the greater part of the way, and except from the hills could probably be seen only from Samaria and its neighborhood; and the sea or lake of Galilee, some fourteen or fifteen miles east of the road, could not be seen at all.

As to cities and villages we hardly know, at this day, whether they passed any of much size or interest, except Samaria, Sychem or Shechem and Bethel. Galilee was indeed full of small cities, as we shall soon see; and so were some parts of Samaria and Judea—probably those through which lay the road to Jerusalem—but of these the names are not mentioned in the New Testament. As to curiosities, natural or artificial, I do not know that there were any till they came to Jerusalem.

Palestine was not a country scattered over with farm-houses, with here and there a village town, or city, sending up its tall spires heavenward, like New England. Nor had it well fenced roads and fields, with their grazing flocks and herds, like our own. The country was indeed thickly settled, very much so in some parts of it; and its fields and vineyards were well tilled and highly productive. Indeed it would be curious to us to see all the hills, even those whose declivities were most steep, richly cultivated—often in the form of stairs or steps to their very tops. But the inhabitants themselves were chiefly collected in little, close, compact villages, as we should call them, though they called them cities. There were also flocks and herds in great abundance, feeding on the thousand hills, but they were under the care of shepherds; for a very small part only of the fields were fenced out, like ours.

The complexion of the people is believed to have been somewhat darker than our own. What they wore on their heads I do not know. They clothed themselves, in general, with loose robes of various colors; purple, white, &c. On their feet they wore sandals; con-

sisting of a mere sole, and bound in their places with straps.

I have already told you that there were none of our modern swift going vehicles there. Neither had they any coaches, nor any wagons, carts nor barrows. Perhaps a few of the wealthy had chariots; and a small number of the people sometimes rode on horses, asses or mules.

The houses were wholly unlike ours. They were in general, small and low, with flat roofs, having walks upon them; and the middle or central part consisted chiefly of an open court. There were still fewer shops, factories, or school-houses. The business of the people was grazing and agriculture. Each family usually manufactured every thing for itself, and instructed its own children. Whether there were stone bridges over the streams which run through the country, as there are very generally now, we have no means of knowing with certainty.

When our travelers wished to stop at a house for the night, they were expected to take off their shoes and wash their feet. For refreshment they probably had bread, raisins, or figs; with parched corn perhaps, and hon-

ey and milk. Their drink was water, with the addition, sometimes, if they chose to use it, of a little wine made of various fruits, often of the grape; and sometimes of the juice of the palm-tree. For bread, the Jews ground wheat or barley in handmills, and baked it in the form of thin cakes, usually without any yeast or leaven.

Such was the country, such were the people, and such the customs which our Saviour must have witnessed in his first journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem; and indeed in nearly every subsequent journey. To most of them, it is true, he was far from being a stranger, as they were substantially the same with those which prevailed about Nazareth, where he was brought up.

But he has now arrived at Jerusalem. Here, surely, you will say, was something new; and it was so. Here the Saviour and his parents spent the eight days of the feast in the usual manner. When the time was expired, Joseph and Mary set out on their return to Nazareth.

As the crowd of people returning from these feasts was very great, especially the day after they closed, and it was hence perfectly easy

for parents to lose sight, for a time, of particular members of their own families, we are not to wonder that Joseph and Mary should proceed a considerable distance from Jerusalem without knowing that their son was not in the company. It seems as if they had traveled in this way all day, or nearly all day, before they discovered his absence. When they came to put up for the night, however, they found that Jesus was missing. It was in vain that they sought for him among their neighbors and acquaintances; he was not to be found. The truth was he had not yet left Jerusalem.

Despairing of finding him any where on the road, and probably beginning by this time to be somewhat alarmed for his safety, Joseph and Mary went back in the morning to Jerusalem in pursuit. It is by no means certain, however, that they set out very early in the morning, as they do not appear to have arrived at Jerusalem in time to make much search for him there until the morning of the third day, when, young as he was, he was found in the temple, with the learned Jewish doctors, asking and answering questions.

The following well written paragraphs, ex-

tracted from the first chapter of Abbott's "Corner Stone" will greatly aid our conception of the circumstances alluded to in this part of the travels of our Saviour.

"Some centuries ago, a large, a very large company were traveling northwardly in early summer, through a lovely country whose hills and valleys were clothed with the fig-tree, the olive, and the vine. They journeyed slowly, and without anxiety or care, for their route lay through a quiet land, the abode of peace and plenty. Friends and acquaintances were mingled together in groups, as accident or inclination might dictate, until the sun went down, and the approach of evening warned them to make preparation for rest. While the various families were drawing together for this purpose, the attention and the sympathy of the multitude were excited by the anxious looks and eager inquiries of a female, who was passing from group to group, with sorrow and agitation painted on her countenance. It was a mother who could not find her son. It was her only son, and one to whom, from peculiar circumstances, she was very strongly attached. He had never disobeyed her;—he had never given her unnec-

essary trouble, and the uncommon maturity of his mental and moral powers had probably led her to trust him much more to himself than in any other case would be justifiable. He was twelve years old, and she supposed that he had been safe in the company, but now night had come, and she could not find him. She went anxiously and sorrowfully from family to family, and from friend to friend, inquiring with deep solicitude, Have you seen my son?

"He was not to be found. No one had seen him, and the anxious parents left their company, and inquiring carefully by the way, went slowly back to the city whence they had come.

"The city was in the midst of a country of mountains and valleys. Dark groves upon the summits crowned the richly cultivated fields which adorned their sides. The road wound along the glens and vales, sharing the passage with the streams, which flowed towards a neighboring sea. The city itself spread its edifices over the broad surface of a hill, one extremity of which was crowned with the spacious walls and colonnades of a temple, rising one above another, the whole

pile beaming probably in the setting sun, as these anxious parents approached it, in all the dazzling whiteness of marble and splendor of gold. The parents, however, could not have thought much of the scene before them. They had lost their son.

"With what anxious and fruitless search they spent the evening and the following morning, we do not know. They at last, however, ascended to the temple itself. They passed from court to court, now going up the broad flight of steps which led from one to the other, now walking under a lofty colonnade, and now traversing a paved and ornamented area. At last, in a public part of this edifice, they found a group collected around a boy, and apparently listening to what he was saying; the feeling must have been mingled interest, curiosity and surprise. It was their son. His uncommon mental and moral maturity had by some means shown itself to those around him, and they were deeply interested in his questions and replies."

One thought of this writer is particularly worthy of the reader's attention; the suggestion that perhaps, owing to the uncommon maturity of Jesus's mental and moral powers,

his father and mother were, much more than we are apt to think, accustomed to trust him away from them.

We need not wonder when we learn, that the father and mother were amazed to find their son in such circumstances as I have described, and so employed. He was not a mere looker on, nor, as it would seem, a mere learner; for he was sitting, when found, in the very midst of the doctors, and though so young, he appears to have been treated by them as an equal. This was no doubt on account of the wisdom which he manifested in his conversation, and which, we are told, astonished all who heard him.

Joseph, notwithstanding his surprise, said little or nothing; but Mary ventured to complain of her son's conduct, inquiring why it was that he had thus treated his father and mother, and how he could be willing to give them so much trouble. And, at first view of the case, it does seem a little strange that he should have done so. Nor does his answer at all lessen the difficulties we are wont to feel. Yet, when we consider that he had a heavenly Parent to serve, as well as an earthly, when we consider that here an opportu-

nity was afforded for saying a few words which should tend to glorify his Father in heaven, and when we consider that he was devoted to God in a peculiar manner by the parents themselves, we need not wonder longer at his conduct, nor at his reply, "Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Such a reply from an ordinary child of twelve years of age would not indeed be commendable; but Jesus was not an ordinary child; and did not Joseph and Mary well know this? It appears to me quite certain that they did; although it does not necessarily follow that they understood his character in all respects. Indeed we know they did not; for the Bible expressly says, "They understood not the saying which he spake unto them."

There is one thing which shows most clearly that Jesus's remaining in the temple, as he did, after their departure, was no indication of disobedience; nor his reply to his mother an indication of obstinacy. I allude to the fact that he yielded at once to their wishes, after they had found him, and went away with them immediately to Nazareth; his Father's work, for the time, being completed. This

was an evidence of his good disposition; and had there been any thing wrong in his previous conduct, the best evidence which could be afforded of penitence. It is also worthy of particular notice, that he was subject to his parents after his return with them to Nazareth; and there is no evidence that he gave either of them the slightest pain again on his account, until he was twenty-nine years of age. Nay more than even all this; we have the contrary assurance, in the statement of the inspired evangelist, that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

Whether the Saviour ever after this attended the feasts of his countrymen at Jerusalem—I mean while he remained under his parents—we are not expressly told, though there is much reason for believing that he did. We find him always taking unwearied pains to be present at the Feast of the Passover, after he entered on his public ministry: but why at this time of a sudden, any more than before? Henry, in his Bible Commentary, says that during the period which intervened between his twelfth and thirtieth year, he doubtless, "came up to Jerusalem to worship

at the feasts, three times a year;" but I do not consider the matter as quite certain. I only regard it as highly probable. But if he did thus attend, he certainly became something of a traveler. Three such journeys a year would be no less than 450 miles, or, in the whole period, 3,000 miles—equal to a voyage to and from Europe; and all probably on foot. These journeys, with the time usually spent in performing them, would consume, in a year, from six to eight weeks. For the rest of the time, he probably labored at his trade, as I have already told you. Such a busy life, alternated with so much walking, was one of the most natural and appropriate preparatives for the arduous duties of his subsequent public career—a life of going about and doing good—which could have been devised or imagined. It is only action that can fit us for action. How great, then, is the mistake of those who make the exercises and duties of the closet and the study their exclusive preparation for a life of active usefulness.

CHAPTER III.

Jesus goes to Bethlehem—Is baptized—Fasts forty days in the desert—Returns to Galilee—Attends a Wedding at Cana—The miracle of turning Water into Wine—Whether the Saviour ever laughed, he being without sin—He visits Capernaum.

When Jesus had completed his twenty-ninth year, and had just entered on his thirtieth, he made a journey to the neighborhood of Jerusalem for a purpose entirely different from any thing which had hitherto governed his movements. The time had now come, which had been determined on in the councils of eternity, when he was to enter fully on his all-important mission. John, his predecessor and precursor, had already been in the field of action several months; preaching and baptizing. "To fulfil all righteousness,"* the

* John's baptism was "unto repentance" only; and the Saviour being free from sin had nothing to repent of; he therefore must have been baptized for other reasons. He was now, as I have said above, beginning to be thirty years of age—the age at which the Jewish priests entered upon their office; and as he was the great high priest both of Jews and Gentiles, it was proper that he should signify his entrance upon the duties of his office, in some appropriate way, as they did. Now what more appropriate than submitting to the baptism of John, an institution, as it was, of divine appointment? Another reason for his conduct may have been, to give occasion or opportunity, as it were, for God thus

Saviour made a journey to the banks of the Jordan, eastward of Jerusalem some twelve or fifteen miles, to a place called Bethabara, to receive the rite of baptism at his hands, and perhaps to hear his instructions. But John knew him, and at the first thought refused to admit him—a person so much superior to himself—to the ordinance. The Saviour, however, insisting on it, John at length baptized him.

If the conjectures of the preceding chapter in regard to the Saviour's going to Jerusalem, are according to truth, his journey to be baptized, was his fifty-third or fifty-fifth journey that way. But the journey was not yet completed. He retired to a wilderness, situated in all probability in the province of Judea, between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, and there, with no companions but the wild beasts of the forest, and at times good or bad spirits, he spent forty days. Throughout this long season of retirement, during the whole of which he fasted, he was much tempted by the devil; but he came off, as we might expect from his character, wholly victorious.

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publicly and at the commencement of his ministry, to declare his approbation of him, and his solemn appointment to the office of Messiah.

Subsequently to his temptation in the wilderness, he appears to have gone again to Bethabara, where he had been baptized, and to have gained a more intimate acquaintance than before with John the Baptist. He also seems by this time, to have become somewhat extensively known as the Messiah, although the notions of the people about him were both limited and confused.

Returning soon after this interview with John, to his native village at Nazareth, he was accompanied thither by two of John's disciples. One of these was Andrew the brother of Peter; the other is supposed to have been John the evangelist. Peter himself, together with Philip, a fellow-townsman of Andrew and Peter, soon joined themselves to the company; and so did Nathaniel whom Jesus describes as being an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile. These five individuals became our Saviour's traveling companions; and were, for the most part, constantly with him.

About this time there was to be a wedding in the small city of Cana, a few miles from Nazareth, and our Saviour and his little company of fellow-travelers, together with his

mother Mary (and perhaps, too, his father, if he was still living), were invited thither. The invitation was accepted, and they all attended the festivities.

Here it was that the Saviour wrought his first miracle, that of turning water into wine. We know not that he made any use of the wine himself; but it was customary in that country for the guests, on those occasions, to make use of it, to some extent; and it added to the interest of the occasion to have an increased quantity of this beverage furnished in a manner so remarkable, and of a quality greatly superior to any which they had on hand, made in the usual natural way. The miracle was, moreover, a means of noising abroad the Saviour's fame, through all that region.

Let me avail myself, on this occasion, to venture a few remarks, here, on the saying that our Saviour often wept, but never laughed. Now I know, very well, that as a general fact, he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But then there were moments of his life when he was cheerful. Such was the one to which I have just alluded. Here he was at a wedding, making glad the guests, as we have every reason to believe, by his presence.

We do not indeed know that he laughed, nor can we suppose that he ever joined in that boisterous mirth which on occasions like the one in question has been sometimes witnessed. Still we are justified in believing he was cheerful, smiling, and happy; and that he contributed to make others happy who were present with him.

Perhaps, too, he sometimes laughed. Is not man a laughing animal? And would we regard that individual quite perfect as a man, who should never in his whole life be known to laugh? Now is it not as certain that Jesus was perfect in his humanity as well as in his divinity? But if he was a perfect man, is it credible that, in his whole life, he should never be known to laugh?

Let us return, however, to our main subject —that of his travels. He had now fairly begun his mission; his fame had begun to be spread abroad; and wherever he went he was sure to be followed by a great multitude of the inhabitants; some from curiosity, some from a desire to find fault, and some for other and various reasons.

But did the knowledge of the influence he had over the minds of the people—did the

knowledge of his wonderful popularity, I mean —make him vain or proud? Far enough from that. We all know how dangerous such circumstances as those in which he was now placed usually are to virtue and piety. No mere human being in the world, not even the most eminently pious, is or ever was full proof against their tendency. The best man on earth is in more or less danger of having his head turned by seeing multitudes following him, and, as it were, saying Hosanna. Now a single feeling of this sort, indulged but for one moment, in the breast of our Saviour, would have been sinful. But does not the Bible expressly say he was without sin? We may be assured, therefore, that his head was never turned, nor his heart lifted up, in the least, by the praises or the flatteries of the multitudes who followed him, even when they came, at last, to spread their very garments in the way before him.

I may include, in this chapter, a short visit made by Jesus to Capernaum. This city lay some sixteen or eighteen miles a little north of east from Nazareth, on the shore of the lake of Galilee, or, as it was commonly called, in those days, the *sea* of Galilee. In this ex-

cursion he was accompanied by his mother, by his brethren—for his father and mother, or at least his father had several children besides himself; whom he always called his brethren —and by his disciples or traveling companions. He does not appear to have staid there long, however, in this instance. The evangelist says "they continued there not many days." Of any works which may have been performed by him there during this visit, we are not informed. Capernaum, however, became, at length, not only the place of his residence, but the scene of many of his most mighty works; but of these I shall say something in their appropriate places.

CHAPTER IV.

The Saviour goes to Jerusalem—Why he attended feasts—Profanation of the temple by buyers and sellers—Jesus drives them out—Miracles wrought—Interview with Nicodemus—Jesus sets out for Galilee—Stops at Jacob's well near Shechem—His adventures—Proceeds to Galilee and stops at Cana.

The season was now fast approaching for attending the Feast of the Passover. Jesus,

therefore, with his disciples, left Capernaum, and proceeded to Jerusalem. This was the first regular religious feast he appears to have attended after entering on the duties of his public ministry.

Was he fond of attending these feasts? not a few individuals may be inclined to ask. By no means. To be fond of feasting, in itself, and for itself considered—that is for the sake of the mere animal gratification it afforded—would be sinful. But the Saviour, I again say, was without sin, entirely so; though he was exposed to all sorts of temptation. I quote, for once, the language of an apostle who speaks of it, that it may be remembered. "Who was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

But if not fond of feasting, in itself considered, why did he attend feasts? Most unquestionably for two reasons. One was that he might fulfil all righteousness; or, in other words, comply with all the laws and regularly constituted observances of the religion of the nation to which he belonged. It was for this very same reason that he had waited till the beginning of his thirtieth year, before entering on his priesthood. For the same reason again,

he had submitted to the baptism of John, at Bethabara. The Jews had their religious baptisms, to which they submitted both before and at the time of John; though they were not exactly like ours. But there was another great and important reason why Jesus attended the Jewish feasts. It was that he might do good; for which there was always at these feasts a fine opportunity.

I have said that these feasts afforded a fine opportunity for doing good. This must have been the case, as a matter of course, in so large a city as Jerusalem and where so large a multitude of people were assembled. Jerusalem alone, according to some historians, contained at this time, several millions of inhabitants; and, according to all accounts, was very populous. Then think of an addition to these numbers, of all the people in the nation, or almost all, above the age of twelve years. What a multitude there must have been often seen in the streets, as well as about the temple, at these festivals!

One thing more may be mentioned to show that the crowd of people, on these occasions, was very great. Though not found in the Bible, it is stated as a fact by those who ought to know.

It is that 250,000 lambs were sometimes offered up in sacrifice at one of these anniversaries.

Those who brought lambs, doves, &c., to Jerusalem to sell at the festivals, had, in the time of our Saviour, fallen into the practice of taking them into the temple, as they would into a market-house, and of exposing them for sale there. This brought all sorts of secular or worldly business into a place for which it was never intended. The temple of the Most High God was never erected that its sacred courts should be disturbed with the din of buyers and sellers and money-changers.

Our Saviour, grieved at such a profanation of holy things, resolved to put an end to it. With this view, having, as the Scripture expresses it, made a whip of small cords, he drove all the dealers out of the temple, giving them, at the same time, the reason for his conduct; which was that his Father's house was never designed to be a house of merchandize, but to be devoted to sacred purposes.

When I was quite young, like some of my readers, I used to wonder how these buyers and sellers came to submit so tamely to be driven out of the temple by a single individual. I wondered, too, that the Saviour should thus

assume the appearance of violence and severity. And it is quite possible, that the minds of some of my readers may have been disturbed in like manner.

But it should not be forgotten or overlooked, that though neither the people of Jerusalem, nor those of any other city or country where Jesus traveled, perfectly understood his character, yet it was generally known, ere this, that he was a most remarkable personage. They took him to be, at least, a prophet. Now a prophet had great authority among the Jews. He was regarded, of course, in the light of a reformer; and not only as disposed to reform existing errors and abuses, but as having full power to do so. Hence it was that they submitted to his requirements and commands. It was not that they were afraid, in the present instance, of the Saviour's simple instrument of attack. This was not, probably, intended to be used, but only carried in the hand as an emblem of the authority, which, as a prophet of God,—for a prophet indeed he was,—he was about to exercise.

I do not mean to say that the Jews never did, in any instance resist the authority claimed by their prophets. On the contrary, as is

well known, they did very often resist them. Many of the prophets were, in fact, not only resisted, but cruelly persecuted, and some were slain. Yet they were also sometimes treated with deference and respect, in the first place; and it was not till the prejudices and the passions of the populace became excited by their leaders, that a mob was raised against them, by whose influence and effort it was that they were ill treated or destroyed.

It seems, however, that some of the Jews who were present on the occasion of which I have been speaking—though perhaps it was not the buyers and sellers themselves—ventured to question Christ's authority. They asked him to give them proofs of it. Prophets were, in those days, considered as fully authorized to act as such, when they had the power of working miracles, and these Jews seem to have expected, in asking Jesus for a sign of his authority at this time, that a miracle would be wrought by him. And what they expected seems to have been granted; though not till something else had been done, in the first place. "Destroy this temple," said he, "and in three days I will rear it up;" referring to his crucifixion, through the instrumentality of

the Jews, and to his resurrection by his own power.—After this, he proceeded to work miracles among them though we are not told particularly of what kind they were.

It was during the stay of the Saviour in Jerusalem, at this very Feast of the Passover, that a Jewish doctor or Rabbi, by the name of Nicodemus, came to him in the night, and desired instruction. Whether he came in the night because he was ashamed or afraid to come in the day time, or because he could not spare any other time for the visit, or whether it was for some other reason, is not known. The interview was an interesting one, and the conversation between them, as recorded in John, 3d chapter, is one of the most instructive to be found in the Bible. There is reason, moreover, for believing that it was a means of great good to the Rabbi, Nicodemus; for, whatever may have been his motives in coming to Christ by night at first, he was not ashamed or afraid to confess him openly and in the day time afterward, as we find from the seventh and nineteenth chapters of the same gospel.

Not long after the interview with Nicodemus, the Saviour, accompanied by his disci-

ples, traveled about in various parts of the province of Judea, teaching and preaching, and endeavoring to reform people wherever he went. Those who were converted, were also baptized; but it would seem from the fourth chapter of the gospel of John, as well as from other accounts in the record, that the new converts were baptized by the disciples of the Saviour, and not by the Saviour himself.

Whether he had any more interviews with John the Baptist, at this time, we are not told. We are informed, however, that John was still preaching and baptizing, in the neighborhood of the river Jordan, and that he was greatly rejoiced to hear of the labors and success of Jesus.

We have spoken, above, of the travels of the Saviour in Judea. The reader will perceive how difficult it is to form any thing like an accurate estimate of the extent of our Saviour's travels in these excursions—whether he traveled hundreds of miles merely, or thousands, and the still greater difficulty of preparing a chart of these travels—a thing which was at first intended. Of what service would it be to attempt to determine, at this day, the

route pursued by the Son of God on these occasions! Who would be the wiser for it, where all must, at best, be nothing more than conjecture? Maps and charts are of inestimable advantage, especially to the young, when they teach certain truth; but they are worse than useless in inculcating what is merely conjectural, especially in regard to the travels of the Son of God.

At length the Saviour was ready to return to Galilee. His disciples accompanied him thither. Their journey led them through Samaria. It is true they could have gone another way, but the distance would have been nearly twice as great. They therefore chose, generally, in passing from the province of Galilee to that of Judea, and in the contrary direction, also, to cross the province of Samaria, which lay between.

You probably know, already, that there was enmity, in those days, between the real Jews and the Samaritans, who were a mongrel sort of Jews; and that the ill feeling often went so far that they would scarcely speak to each other. Nay, their hatred sometimes proceeded so far that the one party were hardly willing to have the other go

through their villages or travel their roads. Indeed, there was no period of their history when a Jew and a Samaritan were willing to hold any friendly intercourse, or, above all, to eat or drink together, or borrow of each other.

Jesus and his disciples probably reached Shechem, or Sychar, at nearly noon, the day after their departure from Jerusalem. The distance was about thirty-five miles. Samaria, the capital of the province of Samaria, was about six or eight miles still farther on, and was a much more magnificent place.

I have said that they reached Shechem about noon. Christ does not appear to have yet gone into the city himself. He had stopped at Jacob's well, which was on the road just before they entered into the city. Here he was alone, resting from the fatigues of his journey, and perhaps, too, of the excessive heat, while his disciples were gone into the city to buy and bring back some provisions. As there was no better seat for him, Jesus sat resting on the side of the well, or on what we should perhaps call the well-curb.

While sitting there, a Samaritan woman came from the city of Shechem with her water-

pot, to draw water from the well. Jesus, as if regardless of customs which he well knew existed, asked her for a draught of the water. She was surprised at this, and could not refrain from asking how a Jew—for a Jew she saw plainly he was—should ask a Samaritan for drink. This led to that long conversation between her and the Saviour, which we find so admirably related in the fourth chapter of John. It also led to the conversion of many of the Samaritans, who had collected together during the conversation; and perhaps to that of the woman herself.

The whole of this conversation at the well, not only of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, but of Jesus and his disciples, is exceedingly important and interesting. Perhaps no part of it, however, is more truly instructive than the conversation between Jesus and his disciples. When they first came back from the city with provisions, their confidence in him was not a little staggered, in consequence of finding him talking with an obscure and perhaps vicious Samaritan woman; and they could hardly help manifesting their surprise; though they did not venture, at first, to utter any direct complaints.

At length, however, hungry probably themselves, and supposing he must needs be hungry also, they begged him to eat something. "I have meat to eat," said he, "that ye know not of;" and lest they should not even then fully understand him, he added; "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

So great was the interest Jesus awakened among the Samaritans of Shechem, that they insisted on his remaining with them awhile; and he accordingly spent a day or two there. After which he resumed his journey, and in due time, arrived with his disciples in Galilee.

It was now the beginning of winter. He had spent his summer in traveling about Judea—in teaching and preaching and doing good.

It appears that the Galileans, his countrymen, received him at first, with great joy. They had heard what he had done, at the Feast of the Passover, at Jerusalem, and were probably anxious to witness some of his mighty works. The miracle of turning the water into wine, though performed among them, few of them had witnessed. It could have been witnessed only by the guests.

Why Jesus, upon his return, did not go directly to Nazareth, it may be difficult to say. He seems, however, without stopping there, to have gone directly along to Cana in Galilee. Here he rested awhile, but not long. There was to be little more rest for him, while he lived. As he had devoted his life to doing good to the souls and bodies of men, in a world where there is so much to be done, it was morally impossible for him to remain quiet a great while, unless he hid himself. One writer of the "Life of Christ" seems to be of opinion that he lay still, as we should call it; that is, did nothing, or almost nothing, in one instance, during a whole summer;* but, from the very nature of the case, it seems to me next to impossible to believe such an opinion to be correct. If he was much among

* It is a singular fact that this writer belongs to a class of our community who seem to believe that they best obey the great command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," when they spend a pretty large proportion of their time in the society of relatives and friends, endeavoring to make them happy. Now I do not object to the general idea herein advanced; but it unfortunately happens that those who make the most of it seem to do very little for their fellow-men, either at home or abroad; but that, on the contrary, they gradually fall into a state of what I call refined selfishness; and what is still worse, endeavor to sustain themselves in it, as it appears from this instance, by the example of our Saviour.

his friends, at Nazareth or Capernaum, why should they so eagerly embrace every opportunity of his arrival any where near them, to go out and meet him? It appears to me, that, instead of indulging himself even in the society of dear friends, he denied himself in this respect, almost continually, and was ever on the alert to do good, leaving his friends and relations, while they were in health, to provide for their own wants, at least their temporal ones.

CHAPTER V.

Jesus heals the son of a nobleman at Capernaum—Goes to Nazareth—Attends worship at the Jewish synagogue—Gives offence—They seize him and drag him away to destroy him—He escapes, and goes to Capernaum—Calls several of his disciples—Casts out a devil—Cures Peter's wife of a fever—Multitude of the sick brought to him—Jesus's habit of early rising—His first regular tour of Galilee—Sermon on the mount—Crowds of people to hear him—Teaching from the ship—Miracle of the fishes—The leper cured—Cure of the paralytic—Matthew called.

While Jesus and his disciples were at Cana, a message came to him requesting his immediate presence at Capernaum. The occasion

of the message was this. There was a nobleman, at Capernaum, whose son was at the point of death, who, having heard of the Saviour's miraculous power, ventured to beg of him to come and restore his son. Jesus, to try his faith, hesitated a little; but, finding it strong and unwavering, he bade him go home in peace, for his son would recover. The nobleman obeyed at once, and while going home, his servants met him, and told him that his son was already fast recovering. On asking them when he began to amend, they told him the fever left him at a particular hour the day before. It turned out that the favorable change took place precisely at the time of day in which Jesus told him his son would live. The nobleman and his whole household became, in consequence of the miracle, disciples of Christ.

Sometime afterward, the Saviour returned to Nazareth. On the Sabbath after his arrival, he repaired, as was his custom, to the synagogue, to join in its religious exercises; probably also to improve any opportunity that might offer of giving public instruction to his countrymen.

It seems that the Jews, in their synagogue

worship, were accustomed to have several different persons read to them from the Scriptures—some say no less than seven. Nor was it uncommon for them to ask this service of distinguished persons who happened to be present. Either on this account, or else because our Lord, as some suppose, had been accustomed to perform this exercise, in this synagogue he was presented with the book of Isaiah, and requested to read it. He complied, selecting such passages as he chose. Some of these were so obviously applicable to himself, while others set forth so plainly the fact that God was about to show favor to the Gentiles, that the prejudices of his hearers were so greatly excited, that they became quite angry with him. They rose against him, even on the Sabbath, and in the synagogue, and with all the customary violence of a mob, they seized him, determined to take his life. To such extremity, however, notwithstanding the violence of their rage, they did not probably dare to go within the limits of the village, but they were determined to do it somewhere, and somehow or other.

A little to the south of Nazareth, on the side of the mountain or range of mountains

on which the place was situated, was a steep declivity or precipice. Towards this precipice, they hurried him along, intending to throw him off, head foremost. Had they succeeded in accomplishing their wicked purpose, he must inevitably have been dashed in pieces; for the height of the precipice was not less than fifty feet.

But his hour had not yet come; and, though the whole world had been in arms against him, he would have found means to escape. Ere they came quite to the brink of the precipice—or brow of the hill, as the evangelist calls it—he turned himself about, and though armed with no weapon but innocence, he passed through the midst of the furious mob, and went away.

Were they blinded? Did he palsy their arms or their hands, by an unseen power? Or were they so overawed by some singular exhibition of his holiness, that they had no power to retain him, and no disposition to follow him till it was too late? In any event he escaped, and went, forthwith, to Capernaum.

Where were the disciples during the riot? If present, were they not in danger? And if in danger, did they go away with their Lord

and Master? These are all questions which I cannot answer. It is hardly probable, however, that they had, as yet, become so identified with the Saviour as to be much exposed to the hatred, or at least to the violence of those who both hated and persecuted him. They had, as yet, for the most part, been mere hearers of his preaching, teaching, and conversation—mere scholars. They had their day of persecution for the sake of the truth, but it does not seem to have, at this time, quite arrived.

I have said that the Saviour, after he was treated thus ill at Nazareth, went to Capernaum. At this place, instead of Nazareth, he took up his abode. Nor was it far from this period, that he heard the unwelcome intelligence, that his friend John the Baptist, at the command of king Herod, had been imprisoned.

Notwithstanding his reception at Nazareth, and though Capernaum, his new residence, was little more than half a day's journey distant, the Saviour did not hesitate to appear boldly in the city, and indeed in the adjacent country, and proclaim every where the gospel of the kingdom of God. "The time is

fulfilled," he would say, "and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel."

Hitherto, though Peter and Andrew and perhaps a few others had been introduced to him, and been much in his company, they do not appear to have been set apart as his constant companions. But the time had at length arrived, when he thought it proper to have them continually with him.

Peter and Andrew were fishermen, and made it their home at Capernaum. One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the sea of Galilee, where they were toiling with their nets, he bade them leave their employment and follow him, and become, as he called it, fishers of men. They left their nets, at once, how dearly soever they loved the employment in which they had been brought up, and by means of which they had been accustomed to obtain much of their subsistence and that of their families, and henceforth became his constant associates. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, by employment fishermen, were at the same time invited to follow him and be with him; they also immediately left their employment, their father, and their other

relatives, and became, like Peter and Andrew, his intimate companions and friends.

While in Capernaum, the Saviour, in accordance with his early habits, attended the Jewish worship on the Sabbath, at their synagogues. Here he was not only a public reader, but, at times, with the permission of the elders or rulers of the synagogues, a preacher. Here it was, that, as he was preaching one day, he encountered a noisy, turbulent spirit which had possessed an individual there, and cast him out, to the great amazement of all the bystanders: a circumstance which did more to spread abroad his fame through all that region than any previous action or miracle.

It was here, too, during his early residence in the place, and soon after Peter, Andrew, John and James had become his regular and constant associates, that he cured Peter's wife miraculously of a fever; which circumstance, together with that mentioned in the last paragraph, proved the occasion of having almost or quite all the sick in the city brought to him to be healed. So numerous were his patients—especially one Sabbath evening, for they would not often bring them to him on

the Sabbath till after sunset—that it is said, on one occasion "all the city was gathered together at the door," either to be cured themselves, or to witness the cure of others.

It was during his residence in Capernaum that we first find from the sacred record that he was accustomed to early rising. Doubtless it was the habit of his early youth; but it is no where so stated. He not only rose early—"a great while before day," but he sometimes engaged—perhaps generally—at this early hour, in prayer.

At this period in the history of the Saviour, we find it first recorded of him that he made the complete tour of Galilee. This, if we may credit the Jewish historian Josephus, was no inconsiderable task. True Galilee was a small territory, not twice as large, I suppose, as the little State of Rhode-Island; and yet Josephus says it contained no less than two hundred and forty cities and towns, the least of which contained 15,000 inhabitants. This alone, to say nothing of smaller places, would make out a population of more than 3,000,000.

I suppose, however, that when the Bible says the Saviour went about all Galilee, it does not mean to affirm positively that he

went into each of its cities, towns and villages. It is indeed *possible* that such is the meaning of the evangelist who makes the statement, but not very probable. The most probable opinion is, that he went into all parts or quarters of the province, and into the principal cities. Among these last, besides those which I have already mentioned incidentally, were Tiberias, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Nain, Cesarea, Philippi, and Ptolemais or Acre.

But his labors, in teaching, preaching, and curing the sick, were not confined to the inhabitants of the province of Galilee, even while he was traveling there. The people of Syria which lay to the north of Galilee, had heard of his fame, and they, too, brought their sick to him. So did the people of Jerusalem, and of the whole province of Judea, as well as of the country which lay eastward of the river Jordan. In short, the demand upon him for instruction and aid began to be excessive, so that had he not been something more than mere man, and had he bestowed his labors without any interruption, he must have been soon worn out by the consequent excitement, exhaustion and debility.

It was at this juncture, however, that in

view of the crowd who pressed upon him, he resolved to retire a little while to a favorable hill or mountain, not far perhaps from Capernaum—though the place is not certainly known—where, if he could not wholly escape the throng, he might at least spend some time in more familiar instruction and conversation. So having ascended the mountain, followed more closely by a few disciples, but more remotely by the multitude who had collected together to hear him, he there delivered to them that very remarkable discourse, known in all ages by the name of the Sermon on the Mount.

When his sermon was finished and he had come down from the mountain, both the curiosity of the multitude and their desire for instruction remained unsatisfied. They still pressed upon him to see and hear him. He resorted to a new device, which was to get into a ship,* and after pushing it away from the shore a little, to sit in it and instruct the crowd, as they collected around the water's edge.

* It is called a ship in the Bible, as indeed almost every thing was which was made to float on the water, from the largest vessels to the smallest boats. It is, however, most probable that the ship alluded to here, was a mere fishing-boat.

It was probably at the close of one of his discourses thus delivered from a fishing-boat, that Jesus wrought his splendid miracle of the fishes. Peter, who occasionally followed his old employment still, with a companion or two, having been fishing all the preceding night without success, was ordered by the Saviour to cast his net once more. Doubtful at first, he hesitated; but soon concluded to obey. The consequence was a haul of fish so large that the net began to break, and Peter and his companion were obliged to call on James and John to assist them: and though we may suppose that many of the fish escaped through the broken net, they filled two boats to the water's edge, with what remained. Peter was astonished, beyond measure, at the event, and so were James and John; and their confidence in the Saviour, from that hour, was greatly increased.

There are doubts in the minds of some writers and commentators about the historical order of the events here mentioned. By a few it is supposed that the circumstances alluded to in the last two paragraphs took place before delivering the Sermon on the Mount, rather than after it. I have followed my own

judgment, aided by what I conceive to be the best authorities; and yet it is quite possible, after all, that I may have erred.

Shortly after this, an individual who was exceedingly afflicted with leprosy—a disease which is generally regarded as incurable—was brought to Jesus to be healed. It is not quite certain that the people had before thought of bringing lepers to him, though it is probable they had, as we are told that he cured "all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease;" and leprosy was quite common in that country.

The crowds of people still increased upon him, especially after the cure of the leper, to an extent which rendered it almost impossible, at times, for him to pass through the streets of the large cities. On this account he spent a part of his time in wild, uncultivated places —deserts as they were then called; both for the sake of quiet, and in order that he might give himself to meditation and prayer. But there was no entire escape for him, in desert or city.

The Saviour's wonderful popularity, notwithstanding the toil and trouble it brought with it, could not fail to awaken the prejudices

and the envy, and wound the pride, of men who thought themselves far better than he; among whom stood foremost the Pharisees and learned Jewish doctors. The following will afford a specimen of the spirit they manifested.

One day when the Saviour had been out awhile—probably in some desert—he entered Capernaum, apparently unobserved, and repaired to his accustomed lodgings. But as it was soon discovered that he was in the house, and the crowd began to collect at the door, he did not refuse to preach to them. In the mean time, the friends of the poor man who was suffering from the palsy, found means to get him to the top of the building and to let him down into the opening or court within, which, as I have elsewhere told you, it was customary to have in Eastern dwelling-houses. Here it was that on account of the great faith he exhibited, Jesus publicly forgave him his sins.

At the idea of forgiving his sins, the Pharisees and other learned men immediately took offence, and accused Jesus of blasphemy. "Who is it," said they, "can forgive sins, but God?" Jesus, however, pursued his own course, not only assuring them that he had

full power to forgive sin, but also to cure the most obstinate disease; and that it was no blasphemy or wrong, in him to do either. He then proceeded at once to heal the disease, so that the man walked away to his own house, as well as ever he was in his life. The Pharisees at this knew not what more to say; and for the present ceased to trouble him; though there is no doubt that much envious, not to say malicious, feeling continued to rankle in their bosoms.

Again the Saviour went out and taught the people by the sea-side, as before. Here he added another to the number of his disciples. It was Matthew, a publican or tax-gatherer. This man left his employment—which was probably more profitable than fishing, and some say it was even lucrative—with as much readiness as the poor fishermen had left theirs; and followed Jesus as perseveringly as they did. He was sometimes called Levi, the son of Alpheus.

I have now mentioned, very briefly, most of the more important events which took place during our Saviour's first course of travels, in the performance of his public ministry in Galilee. Not that I have related half that he

said and did, even of what is mentioned in the Bible. For, besides the Sermon on the Mount, which is quite a long one, there are several parables omitted, as unnecessary in a book of this kind; to say nothing of the details of many events of his life, of greater or less importance.

Moreover, the Bible itself contains but a mere sketch of what Jesus said and did, as we are expressly told by John, one of the evangelists, who speaks as if it would take, as it were, a world full of books to contain every thing!—Have you ever thought how much space would be required for recording all the sayings and doings of a busy man even for one day? How much more then for a month! And how much more still for a year!—But who was ever so busily or industriously engaged, in speaking or acting, as our Saviour was, during the great part of his public ministry?

CHAPTER VI.

Jesus goes to Jerusalem, at the Feast of the Passover—Miracle at the pool of Bethesda—Opposition of the Jews—They seek to kill him—Traveling through the corn-fields—Healing on the Sabbath—Rage of the Scribes and Pharisees—Jesus returns suddenly to Galilee—Teaching again from a boat—The twelve apostles ordained—Character of Judas Iscariot—A sermon on the plain—Jesus goes to Capernaum—Heals the son of the centurion.

Our Lord was at this time, as it is generally believed, about thirty-one years of age; or perhaps a little more; having preached not far from a year. Another Passover was now approaching, which he was anxious to attend. With this view, and accompanied by his disciples, he made a second tour to Jerusalem.

It was on this occasion, and probably not long after his arrival in the holy city, that he performed the miraculous cure of a man at the pool of Bethesda. The man had been sick thirty-eight years; and from the account which the Bible gives of his case was probably poor and helpless. "Rise, take up thy bed and walk;" said the Saviour; and the man was healed in an instant.

These Jewish beds, as I ought perhaps here to say, were not exactly like our beds, but much more simple, and therefore much more easy to carry about. They consisted, merely, of one or more suitable coverlets which they wrapped or rather rolled round themselves, when they wished to sleep, and in which, wherever there was a convenient place, they lay down. Perhaps they sometimes lay on bedsteads; indeed it appears quite evident that they did; but a bedstead was by no means considered as indispensably necessary.

The cure of the poor sick man, at Bethesda, was performed on the Sabbath. The Jews, who thought a great deal of keeping the Sabbath day with rigid exactness, could not put up with this; and they complained, most bitterly, about it, though they did not venture to make their complaints directly to Jesus. He knew their thoughts, however, and perceiving, as we may readily suppose, that they might possibly attempt violence,* he left them and

* One strong evidence of the divine character of our Saviour may be gathered from the fact, so continually alluded to by the evangelists, that he *knew the thoughts* of those around him. Now, who can thus see through that external shell, as it were, in which men often wrap themselves, but he that is omniscient; and who is omniscient but God?

went away. What was expected, actually came to pass. The irritated Jews pursued him, and sought to kill him.

In one instance, on this occasion, they met with him, and a conversation ensued, which, though intended to calm their feelings, by establishing his authority to work miracles when and where he pleased, only seemed the more to exasperate them. In the conversation, he incidentally claimed to be the Son of God; thus, as they justly regarded it, placing himself on an equality with Jehovah. To do this, was in their view blasphemy; and they sought with more earnestness than ever, for a secret opportunity to murder him; but his time was not yet come.

It was in these circumstances, and during a conversation which now took place between him and the Jews, that he asserted more plainly than he had ever done before, his divine nature and character, showing that he held the eternal life and salvation of all men in his own hands; and that, if they wanted either, they must come to him for it, or at least, must seek for it through him. This the Jews doubtless thought to be high-handed blasphemy; and nothing, in all probability,

but the general opinion of the people that he was a prophet, and therefore to be treated with some degree of open respect, prevented them from murdering him on the spot. It was in this conversation, also, that he appears to have first taught the great and glorious doctrine of the resurrection of the body, to be a companion of the soul beyond the grave.

Another instance of what they regarded as a violation of the Sabbath, occurred not long after the foregoing circumstances. The Saviour and his disciples were walking one Sabbath, through the barley-fields* and his disciples, being hungry, plucked some of the ears of grain, and after rubbing them in their hands to separate the kernel, began to satisfy their hunger with them. At this supposed renewal of Sabbath day abuses, the Jews complained outright, and to the Saviour's face. But he defended the conduct of his disciples, showing that the Son of man was Lord of the Sabbath, or could suspend its authority, and that under the existing circumstances the con-

* The Bible, indeed, calls the fields through which they were passing *corn*-fields; but corn was the general name, among the Jews, for all sorts of grain of which bread was made, especially wheat and barley. In the present case, Dr. Doddridge supposes the grain was barley.

duct of his followers was perfectly correct. Though we have no reason to believe the Jews were satisfied with his defence, yet we do not hear that, as yet, any violence was attempted on his person.

But now a new transaction took place. While he was walking about the province of Judea, teaching and preaching and healing the sick, as he was accustomed to do, they brought to him, one day, to be healed, a man whose hand was not only palsied, but greatly shrunk and withered. This, too, was on the Sabbath, and there was quite a number of Scribes and Pharisees watching to see how he kept the day.

So when the palsied man was brought forward, they thought within themselves, Now we shall have a fine opportunity to test his determination about obeying the law respecting the Sabbath. They even ventured to propose to him the question whether the curing of the sick on the Sabbath was lawful.

Jesus, knowing what their most secret thoughts about him were, and how anxious they were to get something against him which they could take hold of, instead of making an immediate reply to their question, bade the

man who wished to be healed, to stand up in the midst of them. He then went into a full argument on the nature of the subject, and showed them most clearly, not only that it was lawful for him to do good to the bodies and souls of men on the Sabbath day, but that in so doing he was going no farther, nor even so far, as they themselves were accustomed to do. They would not hesitate, he said, to rescue a domestic animal that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath, rather than leave it to suffer and die there; and were we not justified, he asked, in manifesting as strong a sympathy with human suffering, and being as prompt to relieve it, as the sufferings of the brute creation?

There was no answering him, or getting away from the face of his arguments. The man was commanded to stretch forth his hand, and, at the word of the Saviour, it was made as whole as the other.

And now it was that the Pharisees were more enraged than ever. Men, though silenced by argument, are not always satisfied. Nay, more; I have sometimes thought that the idea of being overcome in the argument, by wounding their pride, only tended to make

them more vexed, or angry with their opponents. It is, therefore, by no means improbable that this was one reason why the Pharisees complained more now than ever that Jesus was a Sabbath-breaker; and were more angry with him than ever on account of it. They were "filled with madness," as the Bible says, "and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus." They also stirred up the sect of Jews, called the Herodians, and endeavored to get them to assist in bringing about his destruction.

Is it not a wonder how he could escape all their plans and devices? But escape them he certainly did, in one way or another; for he was not killed in a long time afterward. In the present instance, he withdrew himself from Judea, and proceeding to the neighborhood of the sea of Galilee, went to preaching and healing there. Not that this province was so far off, but that they might have pursued and seized on him, even there; but I suppose they were not in the habit of doing such things out of their own province, and Galilee, as I have already told you, was not only a separate province from Judea, but there was even another province—Samaria—lying between them.

But though they did not follow him, to seize him as a criminal, they actually did follow him, in great multitudes, even from Jerusalem and the other parts of Judea. More even than all this; great multitudes followed him from the region of Idumea, which was much farther off than Judea, and lay quite to the south and south-east of it; other multitudes from the countries eastward of the river Jordan, and not a few even from the cities of Tyre and Sidon which lay to the northward of Galilee, in Syria. Indeed so great was the throng, that he was obliged to have recourse to his former practice of getting into a ship, or fishing-boat, and after pushing it off from the shore a little, of sitting in it, while giving his instructions to the people.

His habit of early rising for prayer, &c., has already been mentioned. It was not far from this period of his ministry, that, according to the evangelist, he went, in one instance, even farther than this; he continued in prayer all night. Whether the meaning is that he prayed all night, however, or only that he was all night in a place or house of prayer, is not quite certain. The occasion was, at any rate, a remarkable one; whether he really

prayed all night or not. It is not probable that he would be out in the woods and fields all night, in any ordinary circumstances.

But what was the remarkable occasion to which I have alluded? He was about to attend an ordination—a Christian ordination—the first of the kind which had ever been attended. It was the ordination of the twelve, who were his most constant disciples or followers, to be apostles. The Scripture says they were ordained that they might "be with him," and that he might "send them forth to preach."

Soon after their ordination they went into a house, as the Scripture expresses it, probably to make the necessary arrangements for their future labors as missionaries. Perhaps Judas Iscariot was at this time set apart as their treasurer, or to carry the bag, as it is said; a most sad affair to a person of his cast of character. Handling money very often, in certain dispositions proves the means of developing a love of money, even in those who before cared very little about it.

In this case all was done right, for it was done under the eye and direction of the Saviour himself. The disposition of Judas was

probably had before, and it is not impossible that less evil would result to the community by exposing a man to temptation whose character was already spoiled, than one who had hitherto kept himself pure.

When all the arrangements were made, Jesus and his apostles came down and stood in the plain, where he delivered to them quite a long sermon. It is so much like the Sermon on the Mount, or that recorded in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew, that many suppose it to have been the very same. Yet when we remember that the sermon mentioned by Matthew was delivered on a mountain or hill, that it was evidently preached much earlier in his life, and was much longer than the one of which I am now speaking, is there not good reason for believing that the latter was quite a different discourse, or at least delivered on a very different occasion? You will find this second long sermon in the sixth chapter of Luke.

Jesus now returned to Capernaum, his adopted home. Here, as before, he was soon met by the cry of distress. A certain centurion—a Roman officer, set over an hundred men—having a servant very sick and appa-

rently about to die, sent a deputation of Jewish elders to him, beseeching him to come and heal his sick servant. Jesus, accordingly, went with them.

Before he came quite to the house, however, the centurion sent out other friends to meet him, requesting him to heal the servant without coming in; alleging that he was unworthy to have the Saviour enter his house, especially as a word from his mouth would answer just as well. Jesus, perceiving his great faith, did not hesitate. Go your way, he said to those who came to meet him, as you have believed, so be it done unto you. The servant was immediately in a better state; and before the persons who met Jesus had arrived at the house, he had fully recovered.

CHAPTER VII.

Jesus journeys to Nain—Raises a young man to life there—Receives messengers from John the Baptist—Woes pronounced—The penitent woman and proud Pharisee.

How long the Saviour remained at home, in Capernaum, before he made another long

excursion into Galilee, does not plainly appear. There is no reason, however, for believing that very much time could have elapsed. Such a person as he was could not be hid, even if he were to attempt to hide himself. One thing, however, is certain; he made many short excursions, not unlike some of those noticed in the preceding chapter. One of the most interesting of these was to Nain, a small place some fifteen or twenty miles south-west of Capernaum, a little to the south of Mount Tabor, where he performed one of the most stupendous miracles which the world had, at that time, ever witnessed. It was the very next day after he performed the miracle of healing the son of the centurion, mentioned in the last chapter.

We are not told that he was sent for on this occasion; neither do I believe that he was. How, then, came he to make the journey? you may perhaps ask. How came he to reach the city just at the favorable moment for making such a glorious exhibition of his miraculous power? Was it a mere accident? Or did he, having all knowledge, as well as all power, go there because he knew all the circumstances of the distressed mother, for whose relief he performed the journey?

But to relate the story. As the Saviour in traveling along, accompanied by his apostles, approached the gate of the city to which he was going, he met a large crowd of people assembled at a funeral. It was the funeral of a young man, an only son; and his mother was a widow. Probably he was her only hope, as the staff and support of her old age. It is quite obvious from the affecting account of the case, as given by the evangelist Luke, that the circumstances were peculiarly distressing. For "when the Lord saw her"—the widowed mother—says the evangelist, "he had compassion on her."

But how did he show his compassion? Was it expended in mere words? Or did he do something to prove that he *really* pitied her? Many people, with whom words are very abundant and cheap, will say a great deal about their sorrow for others, when they will not lift a finger to show by their works of charity or love that their sorrow is genuine or sincere.

Such, we may be assured, was never the sorrow of our Saviour. He usually *did* something to show his compassion for mankind, as well as to express his grief in words, or even

in tears. His was an active sympathy that led him to *do* something.

Do you say the young man was dead, and what, therefore, could he do? Yes, he was dead; but Jesus had power over death and the grave, as he proved most abundantly in the end. Indeed, he had but to speak the word—had he chosen to make the experiment, and had there been occasion for it—and all the dead would have been raised to life in an instant. But was he disposed to exercise this power while on earth, in any degree? Let us see.

"And he came," says Luke, "and touched the bier:" that on which the body was supported as it was borne along towards the grave; "and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother."

What a most interesting scene was this, not only to the poor widowed mother, but to all present! As for the mother, though the evangelist does not attempt to describe her feelings, it seems as if she must have fainted with joy. Excessive joy not only produces

such effects, at times, but has been known even to produce instant death.

The effects of such a sight on the spectators are more fully described. "A great fear" came over them all; and no wonder. To see a dead man start up from the very bier on which they were carrying him to his grave, and begin to converse, as if in health, and to see him restored to the bosom of his afflicted family—who would not have been frightened? I do not know that such an event had happened before, from the days of Elijah and Elisha.

Concealment on the part of the Saviour now seemed no longer possible. It was reported every where, not only in all the provinces of Palestine, but even in the adjacent countries, that a man had been raised from the dead; and it was now more fully understood than ever before, that a "great prophet" had risen up among them, and that God was visiting in mercy his people.

Whether the Saviour returned to Capernaum immediately after working this miracle, we do not know. The next event which is particularly recorded of him, is his reception and treatment of some messengers of John the Baptist. This man, though in prison, had

been told by his disciples—who appear to have had the privilege of occasionally visiting him—what Jesus was doing, and either for his own information or for the sake of satisfying his disciples respecting the real character of Christ, he had sent out two of them to make certain inquiries of him.

With these messengers Jesus held quite a conference; but what was more satisfactory to them, as I have no doubt, he wrought many miracles before them, such as restoring to sight the blind, casting out evil spirits, and healing palsies, leprosies, and other diseases.

This gave to the Saviour a fine opportunity after the messengers were departed, for explaining to the multitude around him the nature and character of John's mission, and the relation which it bore to his own. He also took occasion, from the comparison between John and himself, to draw forth and present many lessons of moral and religious instruction.

It was not long after this, probably while Jesus remained in Galilee on this excursion—that he pronounced his woes on the cities Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, because they still refused, as a general thing, to believe in him, and even dared to oppose him.

Chorazin and Bethsaida were small but interesting cities, lying on the western or rather on the north-western shore of the sea of Galilee; and Jesus, as it is believed, had not only spent some time there teaching and preaching, but had also wrought in them some of his more important and striking miracles.

He also delivered to the multitude around him a short but most impressive discourse, after pronouncing the woes, accompanied by a prayer. In the discourse he took occasion to state, in few words, the mysterious nature of the Godhead, and to show that the doctrine of his own near relation to the Father, however difficult to be comprehended, is nevertheless true, and must be received.

And now follows, in the seventh chapter of the gospel of Luke, a most affecting account of the conduct of a penitent woman. It was at the house of a Pharisee, by the name of Simon, who had invited Jesus to dinner. Some have supposed this story to be the same as that which Matthew relates, in his twenty-sixth chapter, but this cannot, as is most evident, be a correct opinion.

While Jesus was sitting or rather reclining at dinner, as was the eastern method of

receiving meals, a woman of the city came behind him, and after washing his feet with tears and wiping them with her hair, she poured upon them a box of costly ointment. This Simon disliked very much; and he told the Saviour so. From this circumstance, Jesus took the opportunity of giving the proud Pharisee much valuable instruction. He also forgave the poor woman her sins, and bade her go home, in peace.

It was not Simon alone, however, to whom Jesus gave offence, on this occasion. Some of the guests were still more offended, especially when he forgave the woman her sins. Jesus, however, went forward in the work of his mission, their clamors and complaints to the contrary notwithstanding.

CHAPTER VIII.

Jesus again travels through Galilee—His companions—The crowds—Trouble from the Pharisees—A grand moral lesson inculcated—His Parables—Attempt to cross the Galilean sea—Storm—Their peril—Rescue by Jesus—They land near Gadara—The demoniac—Jesus re-crosses the sea, and returns to Capernaum—Dines with Matthew—Heals a woman who had been sick twelve years—Restores to life the daughter of Jairus—Restores sight to the blind—Was Jesus a man of sorrows?—Why was he so.

Our Saviour now made a second tour through Galilee. Luke says in the first verse of the seventh chapter of his gospel, that he went through every city and village. It is difficult to conceive how he could have time in one year, or part of one year, to go through every city of Galilee, and yet stop long enough to do the people very much good; and yet it appears from the record, that such was the fact. Perhaps, Josephus, the Jewish historian, whose opinion I have mentioned elsewhere, may have been a little mistaken after all as to the number, size, &c., of the Galilean cities; though there can be no doubt that the whole province was very populous.

In the excursion of which I am now speaking, the Saviour was not only accompanied

by his twelve apostles, but also by many other persons, some of them persons of distinction; and a number of them females. Among these last was Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and Mary Magdalene, or Mary of the city of Magdala; the latter of whom he had dispossessed of seven demons or devils. Another person, spoken of as being in the company, was Susanna, but there were also many more whose names are not given.

The business of these female friends during the long tour of Jesus through Galilee, seems, as stated by the evangelist, to have been to minister to him of their substance. With their aid, he and his twelve apostles could devote themselves to their labors with less anxiety than otherwise. Or they may have attended him principally for the purpose of hearing his instructions, and witnessing his miracles; for it does not seem to have been expected of them that they would attempt to teach publicly.

Again the multitude which followed him began to press upon him with such force as almost to obstruct his passage; and so great was the work of preaching and healing which devolved upon him, that, notwithstanding the

assistance which was afforded them, neither he nor his apostles seemed to find time to take their accustomed meals. So zealously in fact, did he pursue his work, and so little did he attend to the wants of his animal frame, as regards eating, drinking, sleeping, &c., that some of his friends began to think him already deranged, or at least in great danger of becoming so.

One trait in the Saviour's character is particularly worthy of remark in this place; which is, that though he was willing to subject himself to the annoyance of the crowds for the sake of doing good, he was naturally of a quiet and retiring spirit. "He always withdrew at once," says Abbott, in his Corner Stone, "from the crowd, when his work was done. He sought solitude, he shrunk from observation; in fact, almost the only enjoyment which he seemed really to love, was his lonely ramble at midnight for rest and prayer. He even spent whole nights thus, as we are told by the evangelists. And it is not surprising, that after the heated crowds and exhausting labors of the day, he should love to retire to silence and seclusion, to enjoy the cool and balmy air, the refreshing stillness and all the

beauties and glories of midnight, among the solitudes of the Galilean hills;—to find there happy communion with his Father, and to gather fresh strength for the labors and trials that yet remained."

But now arose new trouble with the Pharisees. Jesus having cast out an evil spirit, some of the Pharisees and Scribes who were present charged him with being possessed by a demon himself. This charge he repelled, however, in a course of reasoning which they could neither gainsay nor resist.

Again the Pharisees and Scribes demanded of him a miracle in proof of the authenticity of his mission—a sign from heaven; as they called it. Fully aware that the request was made as much to gratify curiosity as for any other purpose, he refused to grant it. "An evil and adulterous generation," said he, "seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonas the prophet."

As he continued his discourse to the Scribes and Pharisees in the great central opening or court of the house where he was, word was sent him that his mother and brethren were without in the street and wished to speak

with him.* Here, perhaps you will say, was a fine opportunity to test the goodness of his heart. Yes, it was indeed so; but the result was not exactly what might, at first thought, by many be expected.

Instead of rushing forth to embrace them, which he might naturally be inclined to do, he seizes the golden opportunity to convey to the vast multitude around him a lesson of benevolence, self-sacrifice, and devoted piety. "Who is my mother?" said he, and "who are my brethren?" Then, looking round in various directions upon the dense crowd of people, he added; "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Young reader, how much there is to be learned from this single incident in the life of the Saviour! As in the case of his delay in the temple, there was, after all, no real evidence of any want of filial affection, so it was

* It appears that the friends of Jesus having, from time to time, heard that he was preaching so near them, took that opportunity to call on him, both to converse with him and to hear him preach. I think it not unlikely that Joseph his father was by this time either dead, or so decrepid that he could not come to see him, with the rest.

in the present instance. Jesus did not thus speak to make light of the duties he owed to his earthly parents and friends, but to convey in a striking manner, an important moral lesson. It was, as if he had said; "Though the ties of earthly affection bind me as much as they do others, and though I feel the strongest desires to go forth to the embrace of those whom I hold dear, yet, after all, my business is chiefly with you. My meat and my drink is to finish the work of him that sent me; and to lead you all to the love and service of God. All mankind are brethren—my brethren—all are children of one common Parent. But especially are you my friends—my brethren and my parents—if you do what I command you to do. To effect the salvation of men, I am ready to forego every earthly desire, and every earthly attachment. I forego Nazareth; I forego the pleasures of home and of fixed society every where; and I give myself over to perpetual exile; I forego, at this moment, the pleasure of rushing forth to the embrace of friends, that I may devote myself further to you. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, even though he were the meanest individual

of this whole crowd, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

In another instance—I believe it was sometime afterward—he expressed this same sentiment, of comparative disregard to earthly parents in another and a very different manner; a manner which has sometimes given great offence to those who do not seem to understand him. "If any man," said he, "will come after me, and hate not father and mother, he cannot be my disciple." By hating his relatives, there is not the slightest reason for believing he meant any thing more than to overlook them, and deny ourselves the pleasure of their society, when a greater and more glorious object is in view, and likely, by a little effort, to be obtained.

We have no reason to believe, that the mother and brethren of the Saviour loved him any the less on account of his devotion (thus expressed) to the eternal salvation of others, even the whole human race. On the contrary, if they were the true children of God, they must have loved him the better for it. Every one who bears the image of God, loves every other individual of the same description, in proportion to the exactness of the resemblance he bears to that image.

We have abundant reason, however, for believing that the Saviour did not spend a large amount of time, in visiting with his friends; for on the same day that the events of which I have been speaking occurred, he is said to have gone out of the house, and to have sat and taught again by the sea-side: taking his usual position in a boat, while the whole multitude stood on the shore.

It was on this occasion that he put forth the famous parable of the sower; and gave, first to his apostles, and afterward to the surrounding multitude, his explanations. Several other parables were also spoken, at the same time; among which were the parable of the treasure hid in a field; of the merchant seeking goodly pearls; and of the fisherman with his net, gathering in fish of every kind.

When these parables were finished, with the accompanying remarks and explanations, the Saviour attempted to go ashore and proceed along the road, but the crowd was so great that it was quite impossible. In this condition, although it was now nearly night, he proposed to those about him to get rid of the multitude by crossing to the east side of the lake.

It was in these circumstances, and just as Jesus was going on board, that a scribe came to him and declared his determination to follow him wherever he went; and it was to this scribe that the Saviour made the reply respecting his own poverty; "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." It was at this time, also, that, when he requested one who professed to be a disciple to go with him, the latter begged permission to go first and bury his father. We are not told that either of them ever became his hearty followers. The Saviour wishes for disciples who are ready to do what he requires, without hesitation, and without reserve.

A boat being made ready for crossing the little Galilean sea, the Saviour and his disciples entered it, and proceeded on their journey. The boat was a large one, and would hold quite a number of passengers. They were also accompanied by many of the crowd in a number of smaller boats.

This sea or lake of Galilee, on which our Saviour now was, is formed as follows. The river Jordan, rising in Mount Lebanon in Syria, and passing through a very small lake

called lake Meron, at the distance of about sixty or seventy miles from its source, falls into the lake or sea of Galilee. This is sixteen miles long, and has an average breadth, from east to west, of about six miles. Its outlet is a continuation of the river Jordan, which, after running perhaps seventy or eighty miles farther, flows into the Dead Sea.

I have already informed you that it was nearly night, when our Saviour concluded to take passage across the sea. By the time they were fairly out in the middle of the water, it was probably dark. Exhausted by the labors of the day,—for so much speaking, especially to a great multitude, is very fatiguing indeed, —our Saviour procured a pillow and reclined at the hinder part of the boat, where he soon fell asleep.

Small as this little inland sea of Galilee is, it is sometimes quite rough. It was becoming so now, though calm, perhaps, when they started. It grew more and more rough, every moment. Finally it blew quite a tempest. In vain did they wish themselves across; they were still at a considerable distance from the shore. The darkness, too, in all probability, was very great.

The storm became at length so violent, that the very boatmen were alarmed for their safety. The waves beat at times completely over their little bark, and were fast filling it. Wondering, no doubt, that the Saviour could sleep at such a time and in danger so imminent, and supposing, perhaps, that he could do something, either miraculously or otherwise, to rescue them from their peril, they awoke him, gently reproaching him, at the same time, as if he were sleeping on regardless of their danger. "Carest thou not, Master," they said, "that we perish? Lord, save us?"

The only reply he made to their reproaches was, "Why are ye so fearful? Where is your faith?" There was indeed, to all human appearance, great danger. Not so, however, in reality. He who holds the winds in his grasp could still the little sea of Galilee in a moment, when the time should come for him to put forth his almighty power.

Man's extremity has sometimes been said to be God's opportunity. Whether the saying is correct or not, as a general rule, it was certainly so in the present instance. Not only the boatmen but the apostles also, seve-

ral of whom had been bred to the sea, were almost in despair. One ray of hope, indeed, remained. This was in the assistance of the Saviour.

The time for him to interpose had at length arrived. "Peace, be still!" said he; but that was all. No more was said or needed. In an instant the wind was hushed; the agitation of the waters began to subside, and, in a little while, there was a perfect calm.

This was astonishing to them all; but especially to the boatmen. They were greatly amazed, and scarcely knew what to think of it. "What manner of man is this," they said, "that he commandeth even the winds and the sea, and they obey him!"

The storm and the danger over, and the darkness somewhat diminished, they found no difficulty in effecting a landing on the eastern shore of the sea, whither they were bound. They were now in the country of the Gadarenes and Gergesenes; being part of a tract of land which fell to the lot of half the tribe of Manasseh, and which was sometimes called Trachonitis.

The Saviour, though he had escaped from one multitude, was not destined to be long

alone. No sooner was it day,* and he was fairly on shore, than he was met by two men possessed by demons, coming out of the sepulchres, which were, as it is conjectured, in a burying-place, near the city, and appearing so fierce as to frighten every one whom they approached. One of them, as it appears, was a great deal worse than the others. So perfectly unmanageable was he, that even fetters and chains could not be made to hold him. He wore no clothes, nor would he dwell in any house, by night or by day. The mountains or the sepulchres were his favorite places of resort; but even there he was never quiet a moment; and if he had nothing else to do, he was continually torturing himself by cutting or lacerating his flesh with sharp stones.

These two men, thus afflicted, the Saviour was called to encounter. They were not long troublesome, however. They were soon dispossessed. The evil spirits which harassed them, especially one of them, were driven

* The evangelist does not say it was now day, neither are we told that it was quite dark when they crossed the sea. I have in this respect, and for once, given the reins to my own imagination. What I have imagined, however, seems to me quite probable, if not almost certain.

out; and suffered to occupy the bodies of a herd of two hundred swine near by, the story of which, in the fifth chapter of Mark, you have all doubtless read, and to which I must refer you for particulars. The people of that region — the Gadarenes — were excessively frightened when the news of the miracle was spread among them, and they came together almost in a mass, and begged him to leave the country.

I say they were all frightened; but there was one exception. The man who had been so sadly afflicted, and whom Jesus had so wonderfully restored, was exceedingly delighted with the change in his condition, and asked permission of the Saviour to remain with him, but it was not thought expedient. On the contrary, Jesus sent him back to his house and friends. The man, however, could not be satisfied with this. He was determined to do something; and accordingly began to travel up and down the country and relate the story of the wonderful cure which had been wrought on him. He not only spread the strange intelligence through his native city, Gadara, but also through a group of ten cities, lying near the southern extremity of the sea of Gal-

ilee, and called by the general name of Decapolis.

The Saviour did not remain long in the region of Gadara, but complied at once with the request of the people, that he would leave them. A boat was at hand, and, entering it, he soon found himself in his own city, Capernaum.

Here, as soon as he landed, he was again thronged. Multitudes, as it seems, had never yet returned home since his departure; and other multitudes had collected, to hear him and witness his miracles. Jesus, however, left them for a short time, to attend a feast at the house of Matthew, one of his apostles; for Matthew had invited not only his fellow-apostles, but also, as a matter of course, his Lord and Master.

While they were at dinner, a great number of publicans also came in and sat down, having probably been invited by Matthew, as his old friends and associates in the office of tax-gathering. As these publicans had the reputation of being bad men—and as some of them, no doubt, were, for they are often called sinners, or are at least closely associated with them in the New Testament—the Scribes and

Pharisees, ever on the watch, made a great complaint to the apostles against the Saviour's conduct. How is it, said they, that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners!

To these complaints, which the Saviour overheard, he made a long but patient reply, explaining the reason of his conduct, and endeavoring to show the complainants that it was sinners whom he came into the world to save; that good men, if there were any such, were not in perishing need of his instructions.

While he was continuing his discourse at Matthew's table, and the crowd, as I suppose, at the door, waiting for him to come out, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum, came in, and begged the Saviour to go with him to his house, and see his daughter, about twelve years of age, who appeared to be dying. Jesus complied at once with his request, and, accompanied by his apostles, as well as followed by a numerous crowd of people, he proceeded towards Jairus's house.

As he was going along, however, surrounded and hardly pressed by the multitude, a poor woman, who had been afflicted with a troublesome disease for twelve years, which none of the physicians of that region could cure,

though she had spent all her property on them and their medicine, believing that if she could but get to the Saviour and touch his clothes she should recover, found means to effect an opening through the dense crowd, and just to touch the border of his outside garment; when the event which she expected, actually happened. In an instant the hemorrhage or flux, with which she had been so long afflicted, wholly ceased, and she felt perfectly well.

Though the Saviour did not see her, he knew, of course, what had happened; and willing to exhibit the poor woman's faith as an example to the spectators, he turned round and inquired who touched his clothes,—to which Peter replied—not knowing, perhaps, what had actually taken place—that it was only the multitude as they crowded along that happened to hit him; seeming not a little surprised that the Saviour should notice so particularly what must be happening almost every moment. But Jesus, not satisfied with the reply, continued his search, and directing his eye at length to the woman herself, she came up to him, and confessed what she had done, and gave, in full, the reason why she had taken so much liberty. "Daughter," said the

Saviour, before them all, "be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace and be whole of thy plague."

All this, and the pressure of the crowd, caused delay, and in the mean time the daughter of Jairus had expired. Some of the people of the house, coming out, observed that it was unnecessary to trouble the Saviour any farther, as the young woman was dead. But Jesus, who heard it, encouraged Jairus not to lose his faith; and they proceeded together to the house.

When they arrived, Jesus went immediately in, but suffered nobody to go in with him, except Peter, James and John, and the parents. There were, indeed, many persons already in the house, among whom were the near relatives of the deceased, and the customary musicians.* But these were soon directed to

* Not only the Jews, but many other nations, made use of music, either vocal or instrumental, or both, on occasions like this. The musicians—minstrels they are often called in the Bible—were, I believe, usually hired. Several kinds of instruments were used, but the flute was among the more common at the death of children. The object was to soothe the feelings of the mourners, and prevent their grief from becoming excessive. A worthy object, whenever there is need of it: but it is seldom, I believe, in our day that it is so. God calls us to grieve, at the death of friends; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

go out, except the persons whom I have just mentioned; that is, just enough for witnesses. With these witnesses he entered the room where the dead body lay, and taking hold of one of the hands of the deceased woman, bade her arise. In an instant she revived, rose up, and walked; and was able to receive sustenance.

Notwithstanding the faith of the father in the Saviour's power to heal the sick, it does not appear that he had the least idea, when he first went in pursuit of him, that he could raise the dead; for if so, why should he have been *greatly astonished*, as the evangelist says both he and his wife were? And yet, one would think he must have heard of the miracle at Nain.

Be this, however, as it may, they were almost overjoyed at what had happened, and though Jesus, with his usual modesty, asked them to conceal the event, they could not deny themselves the pleasure of relating it, wherever they were, till it was spread abroad through all the country.

Jesus now left the house of Jairus, to go, as I suppose, to his own lodgings. As he went along, he was not only followed by a

crowd as usual, but he was particularly beset by two blind men, crying out to him, and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us."

When he was come into the house to which he was going, the blind men followed him in, and Jesus made inquiries of them respecting their faith. He asked them, especially, if they fully believed he was able to grant the favor which they asked; and finding they did so, he proceeded to grant it.

And what was the process? Nothing more, to be sure, than simply to touch their eyes, and say, "According to your faith, be it done unto you." As soon as these words were uttered, their sight was restored to them, and they went forth, proclaiming to the world the miracle.

A man was next brought to him, who was not only possessed by an evil spirit, but was dumb. A word only from the Saviour was necessary; for in an instant his speech came to him, and he was completely rescued and restored. This miracle, as was usually the case in these circumstances, excited the amazement of people generally, though it roused the opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees. The latter charged him with casting

out the demons or devils, by the assistance of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

The Bible says, in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, that the Saviour was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and who that reads over his history, does not perceive, that if severe, and long continued labors, many cares, and meeting with perpetual hatred and opposition tend to make a person sorrowful, Jesus must have been a man of sorrows indeed.

CHAPTER IX.

The Saviour goes to Nazareth—Boldly teaches in the Synagogues—Goes through other parts—The apostles are to be sent out as missionaries—The Saviour's instructions and directions—They go forth—Jesus follows them at a distance—Death of John the Baptist—The apostles return from their mission.

Jesus now left Capernaum and proceeding westward, came to Nazareth, his native city. In this tour, as in most others, which had hitherto been made, the apostles accompanied him. Whether he expected the people of Nazareth had forgotten their rage against him, or whether he was determined to brave the storm again, if it became necessary, is difficult for us to conjecture.

When the Sabbath had arrived, he again entered boldly into the synagogue, and when an opportunity offered, he did not hesitate to teach those who were present. They were astonished at the wisdom which he manifested, and at his mighty power. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" they said. "Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all here with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?"

So perplexed were the multitude at Nazareth, to reconcile such wisdom and power with so humble an origin, that they derived very little benefit from his public instructions or his miracles. As to the latter, he only performed a very few while in Nazareth at this time; partly because they had no confidence in him, but partly also, as I suppose, because Nazareth and its immediate vicinity were in general uncommonly healthy.

When Jesus found he could do but little in Nazareth, on account of their unbelief and the consequent stupidity which prevailed there, he left the place, and commenced another tour through the province. The Bible account of this tour, though it must have been one of

many months, is in few words. It is as follows.

"And he went round about the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people."

How short an account of the travels of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and his twelve apostles—and a nobler band of men, of the same number, never lived or walked—through a country embracing millions of inhabitants, and hundreds of cities! Why, such a missionary tour, by thirteen missionaries, on foot, and extending through a period of several months—their adventures, conversations, lecturing, preaching, cures of the sick, and their other miracles—would embrace more of interest than a dozen of some of our modern books of travel. Yet the whole is comprised within the short space of three or four lines!

There is, however, an item or two more recorded—not of the journey, but in relation to certain reflections which the journey served to elicit, in the Saviour's mind. He saw the multitudes following him about, and excited by his native compassion at their needy, per-

ishing condition, scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd, he set himself to devise means for their relief.

The first means to which his mind turned—that which should always be attended to first, when any great work is to be accomplished, or any great want to be provided for—was prayer. In this he expects his apostles at once to engage. "The harvest truly is plenteous," said he, "but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

But though the work was to be commenced with prayer, it did not end with it. Prayer should be accompanied by effort. Jesus now began to develop the rest of his plan—the means he had selected for accomplishing his purposes. It was to send out his apostles, two by two, on separate missionary excursions through all parts of the country. They had been long enough with him, by this time, to know something of his purposes, to learn something of his manner of teaching, and to imbibe much of his spirit.

So calling them together, he proceeded to prepare them for the mission. The first part

of this preparation was to empower them to work miracles; to cast out evil or unclean spirits, cure diseases, &c. The second was to give them particular instructions where to go, how to proceed, and what to teach. The third was to give directions in regard to their support.

They were allowed and required to go into the various cities of Israel, that is, as some understand it, into the provinces of Galilee and Judea; but they were not allowed to go among the Samaritans, or into Syria, Idumea, Arabia and other adjoining countries—whose inhabitants were called Gentiles; for, though Christ had in one instance condescended to teach the Samaritans, and in many instances to cure the Gentiles, the set time to favor either the Samaritan or the Gentile world in any considerable degree, had not yet arrived.

It is supposed by some, as I have already observed, that they were permitted to go any where in Judea or Galilee; but I am strongly inclined to believe that whatever might have been the intention of the Saviour respecting them, they did not actually go out of Galilee, but spent their time in that province.

The slender preparation, in another respect, they were required to make, is surprising. They were to go forth without provision, and to have none provided beforehand at the public houses or cities through which they were to pass. Neither were they to take any money with them to pay their expenses; nor but one suit of clothes. They were to depend, almost solely, on the charity—justice rather—of the people among whom they traveled. "The workman," said the Saviour, "is worthy of his meat." Nor do they seem to have been allowed to carry or use any weapons of offence or defence. They were to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves; but they would not have appeared very dove-like, had they been armed with swords or other war-like weapons.

But the particular instructions which were given them, though curious and interesting, are too numerous to be mentioned here. Suffice it to say, that they went out and followed, to the best of their ability, the Saviour's directions, preaching every where the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and urging people, by repentance and faith in Christ, —who was to follow them—to enter it.

When the twelve were gone forth, Jesus followed them at a distance, preaching, teaching and healing in the cities of Galilee—probably in the very cities which the apostles had just passed through before him. Thus would they prepare the way for his coming, and open a door, humanly speaking, for his success.

It was, probably, while Jesus was on this tour that he heard of the death of John the Baptist. He had long before been imprisoned, as I have already told you. Finally, however, at the order of Herod he had been wickedly beheaded. His head had been taken away; but his body was left to his disciples, who buried it and then went into Galilee and informed Jesus what had happened.

After some time had elapsed, the apostles returned from their mission and gave to the Saviour a full account of their teaching, preaching and working miracles; and, as far as they knew what it was, of their success. It must have been an interesting and joyful meeting.

CHAPTER X.

Jesus is still oppressed by the crowd—Leaves them, and crosses the sea to a desert near Bethsaida—Is followed—His instructions—the people hungry—Jesus feeds them miraculously—They attempt to make him a king—To avoid this he resolves to return to Capernaum.

The news of what Jesus and his apostles were doing reached Herod about this time, and he was quite anxious to know more about them. He was particularly anxious to see the Saviour. Of this anxiety Jesus had received information about the time of the return of the apostles. On this account, but still more, perhaps, on account of the crowd, and to give the apostles a little while to rest, he proposed to them to retire from the public gaze and from the public persecution, too, to a wild, unfrequented place, or, as it was then called, a desert; and to this they cheerfully assented.

But whither could they go to escape the multitude? Entering a boat, they crossed the sea of Galilee, and proceeded to a desert which lay near the city of Bethsaida. Now Bethsaida, though on the east side of the sea,

was just at the north end of it, and it was very little farther from Capernaum to that place by land than it was by water.

Jesus and his disciples, though they were easily separated from the crowd by getting into a boat, were not separated from them any considerable time. Observing the direction of the boat, and judging, perhaps, that he would stop at Bethsaida, or near it, the multitude followed him by land around the north end of the sea. It was four miles to Bethsaida by water, and it may have been about five by land, certainly not more. It was not difficult, therefore, if they made great haste to get there before the boat, which, as we are informed, they actually did.

Jesus always full of compassion, could not but be greatly moved at the anxiety of the multitudes to see and hear him. He had not the heart, therefore, to order them away from his presence, or to escape miraculously, or by further flight. Accordingly he consented to instruct them a little longer.

In order to do this, however, with most effect, he went up to the top of a hill or mountain, and there with his disciples sat down, while the multitudes again gathered round

them. It was, indeed, a pleasant season for instruction out of doors, or under the trees, as it was probably late in March; and the spring in that region is at this time very far advanced. Here he continued his instructions till it was nearly night.

When the day drew to a close, the apostles reminded the Saviour that as there was neither provision nor lodging there for the multitudes, it might be well to dismiss them, and let them go either to their home, or to some other place where they could be accommodated.

But the people were already hungry, and Jesus, who knew all things, perfectly understood it, and forthwith began to contrive for their relief. Turning to Philip, he asked him in what way bread could be procured. Philip observed that it would take at least two hundred pence worth to give them all but a morsel, as it were, apiece.

Reader, have you ever thought what a multitude this must have been, from the fact here mentioned in regard to the bread? A penny was equal to about fourteen cents; therefore two hundred pence would be twenty-eight dollars. Now if money was worth, at that time, about

ten times as much as it now is, or, in other words, would buy about ten times as much—which I consider as very probable, and if bread is reckoned at four cents a pound, then twenty-eight dollars would buy about seven thousand pounds of bread. Yet this bread, could it have been obtained and divided among the many thousand persons present—for there were five thousand men, besides the women and children—would, in all probability, have given no more than a good substantial meal to each. But the two hundred pence were not to be employed for this purpose, even if Judas, the treasurer, had so much money in his hands, and if so much bread were to be had. A miracle had been resolved on by the Saviour, and a miracle was actually accomplished.

He first assured Philip that it was unnecessary for the people to go away without their supper, and requested him to make immediate provision to supply them. Philip, not at once comprehending his meaning, wished to know how it was to be done. "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread for them?" he now inquired. Jesus asked how much provision there was in the company.

Andrew replied, saying that there was a lad present who had five barley loaves and two small fishes; "but what are they," said he, "among so many?"*

Jesus commanded them to be brought to him. Then causing the whole multitude to be formed into rows, some by fifty in a row, and some an hundred, he required them to sit down on the grass, and receive what should be distributed to them. When they were set down, he asked the blessing of heaven upon the loaves and fishes, and then, having broken up the loaves, he directed his apostles to distribute them among the multitude.

While he was breaking the bread, or while they were distributing it—for we know not, of course, precisely when it was done—the Saviour, by his miraculous power, had so increased its quantity, that, instead of being a scanty supply for them, it fed the whole multitude, in the most liberal manner, and they even had some of it left. Some, did I say? They had more left, in fact—much more—than

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* A twenty-fifth part of an ounce, perhaps, to each—the women and children not included! A morsel as large as a good sized pea, or if there were as many women and children as men, not more than half as much.

they had when they began the meal; for, instead of five loaves, they had twelve baskets full of fragments of the bread and of the fish. Of course, we do not know the size of these baskets; but we know that any ordinary baskets used to collect fragments of bread and other food would hold more than a loaf of bread each; and yet there were many more baskets than loaves.

A trouble now arose. Some of those who had witnessed the miracle of the loaves and fishes, being assured that Jesus was the great Messiah, who had so long been expected to come and deliver and rule the Jewish nation, were for laying hold of him and compelling him to be their king, whether he was willing to be so or not. Jesus, on the contrary, was determined to avoid such a result to the utmost. The best way to do this, humanly speaking, was to return to Capernaum.

Before he returned, however, he wished to send the multitude away. So he requested his apostles to get into a boat and cross the creek or bay which separated the desert in which he now was, from the city of Bethsaida, at which place he would join them. The apostles therefore proceeded to do as they were commanded.

CHAPTER XI.

Jesus on the mountain at prayer—The apostles driven out to sea —Jesus walks to them on the water—Peter attempts to come to him—The consequences.

When the apostles were gone and the multitude had retired, and the shades of night had begun to appear, Jesus, as was his custom, retired a little way to a hill or mountain for prayer; where, as it afterwards appears, he must have spent several hours, or, as some suppose, the greater part of the night.

But where were the apostles all this time? Had they anchored their boat at Bethsaida, and were they waiting for him there? It seems, on the contrary, that in attempting to get over the small body of water which lay between the desert where the miracle was wrought and the city, they had been driven out to sea by a contrary wind, and that, instead of getting towards Bethsaida, they were now being driven towards Capernaum on the opposite side of the sea. This must have been a great trial to them, as Jesus was not with them, and they probably knew not where he

was. True the distance by land was not great, and he could walk thither; but as he was expected to overtake them at Bethsaida, they probably concluded he might be at that place, all this while, waiting for them.

However great their anxiety may have been to reach the port of Bethsaida, it was not possible; for they were already in the very middle of the sea: the wind also was against them; and the sea, for so small a body of water, was very tempestuous.

Those who have never been in similar circumstances can have but a faint idea of the trials of poor seamen, when encountering adverse winds, and driven away from the very port to which they are bound, and which perhaps was just before in sight. But in the case of the apostles, their greatest trial was on account of the Saviour. Had he been in the boat, they would willingly have yielded themselves to the wind which would have at once wafted them home to Capernaum.

Jesus, who knew all things and events, knew very well, though it was dark, what were the circumstances and feelings of his companions. Perhaps he intended to delay coming to them; and, by means of his miraculous

power, to put their faith in him to a severer trial than it ever had been before. Whatever may have been his intention, they certainly were sorely tried.

As I have already said, in spite of all their efforts, they were, by this time, in the middle of the sea, two or three miles from land. It seems also to have been quite late in the night. And yet, faithful to the interests of their Master, and desirous of reaching Bethsaida if possible, they were still rowing against the wind, and trying to reach the port.

In this time of distress, somebody approached them, walking on the very surface of the water. This was a new sight to them. Who could it be? Was it some celestial messenger sent forth for their relief, or to bring them intelligence? They do not appear to have thought at the time, that it could possibly be the Saviour. "It is a spirit," was the general cry: and some of them were frightened exceedingly.

But their fears were destined soon to subside. It was Jesus! He spake to them in his gentlest manner, and told them it was he, and they might be quiet and take courage. The individual was now come to them, who

could command both the wind and the waves, as he had given abundant proof, on a former occasion.

As they knew his voice, their fears began to subside, and the warm-hearted Peter, always foremost in every thing which required a little extraordinary boldness or bravery, and to show forth, perhaps, his faith, proposed to come and meet Jesus on the water. One cannot help thinking that another motive had weight with Peter at this time—the desire of doing what Jesus was doing, or perhaps the desire of doing something a little extraordinary; something which every one could not do. Whatever his motives may have been, however, his request was granted; and he stepped forth at once upon the troubled sea. It sustained him; and for a moment he went forward to meet his Saviour.

But he had not proceeded far, before the roughness of the water and the violence of the wind began to alarm him, and he found himself sinking. It was a perilous moment to him; a little help from the Saviour, or he was lost. In the agony of his soul, he cried, Lord, save me!

We have no evidence that any individual, in any circumstances whatever, who believed himself in danger as to body or soul, and cried mightily to Jesus, as Peter did, for relief, was ever neglected. But however this may be, the cry of Peter was not vain. Jesus, who by this time was near him, had but to stretch out his hand and take hold of Peter's, and he was safe; and the water became as solid to him as it was to his divine Master.

Jesus, after gently reproaching him for his want of perseverance and faith, accompanied him into the boat, to the great joy, no doubt, of the rest of the apostles and of the crew. They had now nothing to do but to yield themselves to the wind and guide the boat a little, and they were soon on a landing place near Capernaum.

CHAPTER XII.

Jesus and his apostles land at Capernaum—Are followed by the multitude—The Saviour's instructions—His great plainness—Some leave him—Close questions to professed believers.

As it was probably now daylight, it was impossible to conceal their arrival. No sooner

were they on shore, therefore, than they began to have a crowd about them as usual—some to hear him, some to see a miracle, if by chance he should perform any; some to bring their sick, and some to be cured themselves.

One cannot help wondering at the patience of the Saviour in these circumstances. Go where he might, as every reader may easily perceive, there was no getting away from the people, except by miracle, hardly long enough to eat or sleep. Does the Saviour fret himself on this account? Never; so far as we know. It is true he used every human means of evading the crowd, especially at times, but then he never complains. He teaches and preaches and heals, as fast as he can; and he perseveres in so doing. This was the life to which, in leaving the bosom of his Father and descending to this lower world, he had devoted himself. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, that is to *serve*. He came not to please himself, nor to be pleased; but to please others, or at least to do good to others. He was ready at all times, and in all circumstances, to give up self and selfish feelings—every thing, in short, which could advance his own happiness, in

any form whatever, for the good of others. He was willing even to die for others, should it become necessary, as the event fully proved.

Will a person whose object is to "spend himself and be spent" in the service of others, be found complaining of a little fatigue or vexation? Will he not, on the contrary, be willing to toil on, as long as he has strength, and be content to wear himself out in that toil? Will he shrink from the discharge of labors and duties the most arduous and severe?

And may not mankind—those of us who profess to be the Saviour's followers—learn an important lesson from his remarkable example? Are we not universally inclined to be selfish—to seek to gratify ourselves rather than yield any thing which might make us comfortable for the good of others? Are we not more willing to be "ministered unto" than to "minister"—to be *served* than to *serve*. In short, are we not, in every respect, the very contrary, in our character—I mean as we are naturally inclined—to Jesus Christ? It seems to me that this is, or should be, one of the tests of Christian character. In proportion as we are like Christ, we shall give up our own native selfishness, and live for the good of others. Is it not so?

Yet how can we be regarded as the followers of Christ, unless we are like him? Can we follow him, and yet *not* follow him? Can we be like him, and yet be exactly unlike him? Can we at one and the same time make it the great business of our lives to please ourselves, and to please or to do good to others? Are the two things possible?

What then is to be done? No one supposes we are called to please others, to do good to them, or to serve them in the same way, exactly, as our Saviour did. We are in different circumstances, from those in which he was placed, and sustain different relations. This, however, does not alter the case, as to principle. But the same spirit which attracted him—the disposition to live for others, instead of living for ourselves—must actuate us, and influence all our movements, and constitute the leading trait of our characters; or, depend upon it, reader, whatever we may think, or whatever we may flatter ourselves to the contrary, we cannot be his, here or hereafter.

But to return to our Saviour's travels. As the boat which the apostles had entered on the eastern side of the sea, was the only boat which the multitude whom Jesus sent away

had seen about there, and as they knew the Saviour did not get into that which his apostles entered, many of them, though upon his dismissing them they had retired a little way, returned to the spot the next morning, hoping to find him still there, or somewhere in the neighborhood.

But when they had reason to believe he had gone back to the western side of the sea, they took the first opportunity of either coming around or of crossing over to him. When they arrived, they asked him how he came there—"Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" Jesus replied by charging them with that selfishness, of which I have just been speaking. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

Here he went into a long course of instruction and reproof.* He endeavored to divest

* I have said instruction *and* reproof; but the truth is, after all, that all instruction of a moral kind, if received at all, is apt to be regarded as reproof. It is humiliating to proud man to be instructed; and he is apt to regard moral instruction as a sort of reproach of his ignorance. We should therefore endeavor to be as gentle as possible in our instructions, and to assume as little as possible the appearance of superiority. We can seldom assume the tone of our Saviour, even were it prudent or best, for we have not his authority.

them of their low, narrow, selfish views; to show them his own true character; and to enforce his claims as their prophet, priest, and king, and to demand their farther love and confidence. This conversation is one of the most interesting in the whole record of his life.

It does not seem, however, to have been satisfactory. It was too spiritual for them. He told them that except they ate his flesh and drank his blood, they could not have a particle of spiritual life in their souls; and that he was the flesh or bread which they must eat—the bread which came down from heaven. Sometimes their dissatisfaction with his conversation broke out into open murmurs; sometimes it was concealed or suppressed.

Strange as it may seem to us at this distant day, his very disciples—not the twelve, but others who followed him almost constantly—some of them at least, could not understand him. This is a hard saying, one would think within himself; and another, perhaps, would utter his sentiments aloud. It was for want of spirituality, and Jesus plainly told them so, and even expressed his belief, that some of them—alluding, perhaps, more particularly to Judas Iscariot—had no faith in him.

This was the sorest trial to which they had ever, as yet, been subjected. In following him about, they had gone through many difficulties, and been tried, as they supposed, in almost every way already. To have their love or their confidence doubted, however, was not so easy to brook. But Jesus was resolved to deal plainly with them, and if they could not stand it, it was better, perhaps, that they should leave him. One selfish man—one Judas—in his company, was doubtless quite enough.

This severe, searching process of our Saviour had its intended effect. Some of those whose consciences plead guilty to a want of faith as well as of spirituality, to a want, in short, of likeness to him—and who knew in their own hearts that it was the loaves and fishes they were after, rather than the bread of heaven, now went away, and traveled no more with him.

Jesus saw them departing, and in view of the powerful influence of example, said to the twelve apostles, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered him, by saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure

that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God." Have not I chosen you, the twelve, said Jesus, and yet, notwithstanding this mark of favor, is not one of you a very demon for wickedness? He referred to Judas Iscariot, whom he foresaw would be his betrayer and murderer.

How many a time during my early youth, as I have read the Scriptures of divine truth, especially this striking account of the selfish disciples leaving Jesus to return to him no more, perhaps, till covered with confusion of face they returned to say to him, in vain, Lord, Lord, open unto us;—how many a time I say, I have shuddered! Leave the Saviour, I have said, when they had experienced kindness, heard his most blessed instructions, and seen his miracles! How could they do so?

But how little did I know, at that time, of the nature of the human heart! How little did I perceive its want of spirituality—nay, my own want of it! How little did I see, what was undoubtedly true, that my own disposition was the same with that of these very Jews, at whose conduct I so much wondered!

And yet, I have not the slightest doubt, at the present moment, that such was the fact.

I was as destitute of spirituality as these apostatizing Jews, and could have borne no better his searching, sifting process. I thought, indeed, that I saw beauty in his character; and so I did. But the moment the world, with its pleasures and allurements, came in competition with my regard for the Saviour, the latter was permitted—nay, required—to step aside.

Was I alone? Were there not others—are there not now others—who are in the same situation? Nay, are there not some of the disciples of our Lord and Saviour—professed disciples, I mean—who are in the same condition? Suppose they were tried by the severe tests which were presented by our Saviour himself—would they stand the trial?

Suppose the Saviour—it is not irreverent to make the supposition—were now to pass through our New England cities and villages, as he once did through the cities and villages of Galilee, and for a similar purpose. Suppose him to appear, not indeed precisely in the *same style of dress* and with the *same manners* as then, but in a style as plain and simple, in comparison with the fashions and requirements of the present times, as he did eighteen hundred years ago, in comparison

with the times, as they then were. Would our young people, especially the gay and fashionable young men and young women who are just entering with interest into matrimonial life, or engaging in business, or are wholly devoted to amusements and pleasures —would they be willing to hear his instructions? Would they be willing to be seen in his company? Would curiosity, which is always very strong—the desire to witness his miracles—induce them to appear in his train? But suppose he should go farther, and call upon them by name, and request them to follow him, is there a doubt that they would, at once, make good their retreat?

Suppose he was even to call on some among us who now profess to be friendly to him, and request our constant attendance, would his request be complied with? Should we dare to be seen with him? Not that we should be willing to make our objections, openly, against his plainness of appearance, or confess our own want of spirituality. But how many excuses would be made—business engagements, poverty, our own families, the times, &c. Suppose we were called to give up all for his sake—houses, lands, merchandize, family,

yea, and life, if necessary—and go, as the apostles of old did, and spend our whole time in teaching, preaching, and working miracles; ridiculed, persecuted, and murdered as they were. Do you think we should do it?

I greatly fear that multitudes of those who are called by the Christian name would be too proud to be seen in the Saviour's company; too selfish to share his poverty, and too lazy to persevere as he did in doing good in spite of opposition, especially when they had, like him and his twelve apostles,—some of them at least—quiet and peaceful homes, and happy families, to which they could retire.

But I must return from these digressions. It was not far from this time that the Saviour held a long conversation with the Pharisees about washings, &c. The latter, as it appears never allowed themselves to eat without first washing their hands; and finding among the vast multitudes of those who were called the disciples of Christ a few that did not attend to this ceremony, they made their complaint about it to the Saviour. He took advantage of the occasion to inculcate on them the importance of internal cleanliness, or, in other words, moral purity; and after many long dis-

courses with the Pharisees and with the people in general, he gave private instructions to the twelve on the same subject. It was his custom to explain to the twelve, in private, many things which were mysterious to the multitude, and which perhaps it was not intended they should understand fully at the time they were spoken.

CHAPTER XIII.

Travels of the Saviour into Syria—The Syrophenician woman meets him—He heals her daughter—Heals a deaf and dumb man—Miracle of feeding the four thousand—Jesus and his apostles sail for Dalmanutha and Magdala—They return soon—Come to Bethsaida—Jesus heals a blind man—He and the apostles go to Cesarea Philippi—The Transfiguration—Cure of a lunatic—Tribute demanded—Another miracle—Dispute of the apostles about precedence—The Saviour's gentle yet efficient rebuke—Uncharitableness also rebuked—Forgiveness of injury inculcated.

Hitherto, it is not known that the Saviour had been out of Palestine, except in his infantile journey into Egypt. The inhabitants of the adjacent countries of Syria, Idumea, and Arabia, as I have already told you, were considered as Gentiles, and were regarded as unfit or unworthy, or at least unprepared for

the gospel. It is true he had occasionally healed some of their sick; though, as it is believed, not very many.

But now it was, in order to screen himself, for a time, from the multitude, or for some reason unknown to us, that Jesus, accompanied by the twelve, went forth, for a little while, into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. These two places lay on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, in the western or rather southwestern borders of the province of Syria.* It is said that he attempted concealment at first; but concealment here, as elsewhere, was impossible.

It has been observed that he went just within the limits of the region about Tyre and Sidon; but some think he only approached them as if he was *going* to enter. I do not know how this was. Of one thing, however, are we certain, which is, that if he did not enter the country, he taught and healed some of its inhabitants.

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* Some of my readers may be a little surprised that I speak of Tyre and Sidon as belonging to Syria. They are put down on most of our Sabbath school maps as belonging to Palestine; being within the limits of the tribe of Asher. But although they do not appear to have ever been subdued by the Israelites, they seem to have afterwards constituted, practically and really, a part of Syria.

For, as he was passing along through these regions, he was met by a woman from the neighborhood of the cities just mentioned whose daughter was possessed with a devil. Approaching him—for it seems she knew him —and putting herself in a posture of supplication, she implored him to have mercy on her daughter, and restore her to health. The apostles advised him to send her away; thinking, in all probability, as they did of the woman of Samaria, at the well of Jacob, that it was not for her, a poor Gentile, to be benefited or to expect to be benefited by their Master's labors.

The Saviour himself seemed disposed at first to pass her by; and gave, as the reason, that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and not by any means to the Gentile nations. But the Syrophenician woman for such she was called, was importunate, and would not be refused; and Jesus seeing her great faith in him, at length condescended to grant her request, and her daughter was made whole.

The Saviour did not tarry a great while in these regions, but turning back, he proceeded along the western coast of the Sea of Gal-

ilee, to Decapolis, or the "ten cities," which, as I have elsewhere said, lay a little to the south of that sea. Here, having ascended a mountain, he sat down there, probably to rest himself and perhaps also to teach; for it seems to have been quite customary in those days to teach in a sitting posture.

While he was in this region the inhabitants brought to him a deaf and dumb man, begging that he too, among the rest, might be cured. Jesus made no objection to this; being now in his own country, among his own nation of the Jews—the lost sheep to whom he was sent. So after taking him aside, he put his fingers into his ears and spit, then touched his tongue, and at the same time looking upward and sighing, said Ephphatha, which meant "be opened." No sooner was this done than both his deafness and dumbness left him to the great astonishment of the spectators, as well as to the great joy of the poor sufferer.

Here also in this region of southern Galilee, Jesus performed another stupendous miracle of feeding the multitude around him. They had been with him about three days; and as it would seem, without food, or almost without

any; and, as many of them lived a great way off, Jesus thought it necessary, before sending them away, to feed them.

Whether the apostles had forgotten the former miracle or not cannot now be known; but certain it is that they acted as if they had. They made the same objections, or rather presented the same sort of difficulties, which Philip had brought, when Jesus was about to feed the crowd near Bethsaida. "Whence," said they, as soon as the subject was agitated, "should we have so much bread here in the wilderness, as to feed so great a multitude?"

On inquiry how much they had, it was found that they had, in all, seven loaves of bread and a few small fishes. This, for the Saviour's purpose, was enough. Almighty power could indeed have made one loaf and one fish satisfy the multitude as well as seven of either or each. Or, if the miracle consisted in adding to the *quantity* of the bread, which I suppose was the case, the same power could add to one loaf the necessary quantity, as easily as to a dozen.

The multitude to be fed at this time was about four thousand men, besides women and children. They were arranged in rows on the

ground, as in the former instance; and the same forms or ceremonies, or nearly the same, were observed, and with the same results. All were fed, and well fed, and seven baskets full of fragments remained.

When all had eaten and were satisfied, Jesus sent them away. As soon as they were gone, he and his apostles having procured a boat, went on board, and set out for the cities of Magdala and Dalmanutha.

Here he again encountered the pride and craft of the Jews who dwelt there, especially the Pharisees and Sadducees. They demanded signs from heaven, or, in plain language, miracles, in proof of the truth of his mission. But these, for reasons which he freely gave them, were refused. He does not appear to have staid long at this time in these places; but with his apostles he soon recrossed the sea and went into his native region.

After they had thus returned, and had begun their journey along the western shore of the sea in another direction, they came to Bethsaida. There were two places called by this name, one of which has been mentioned in other chapters. The one at which the Saviour and his apostles had now arrived, was

not far from Tiberias, at a considerable distance southward from Capernaum.

Having come into the city, a blind man was brought to him to be cured. Jesus ever ready to all good works of the kind, healed him, in a manner similar to that in which he had healed the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis.

Leaving Bethsaida and journeying northward, without stopping long—if indeed they stopped at all—at Capernaum, they came, after a journey of about two days, to Cesarea Philippi.* This was quite the northern part of Galilee; forty miles at least north of Capernaum; and lay near the foot or base of Mount Hermon. It was then a city of considerable size. At present it is a village of only about 150 houses, and is called Banias.

It would appear that while Jesus and his apostles were journeying along to Cesarea Philippi, they stepped aside at times, a little way from the road, for prayer. On a certain occasion of this sort, a conversation took place,

* I believe this city was on the site of the ancient city of Dan, so often coupled with Beersheba. Thus, from "Dan to Beersheba," meant from the northern, quite to the southern extremity of the land.

in which the Saviour endeavored to ascertain the views of Peter, in regard to his own character. Here it was that he uttered the remarkable expression, Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. A statement the more remarkable on account of the promise it contains of the perpetuity of Christ's church. Let him whose fears have been awakened, for the moment, in regard to the safety of the church, remember this promise of the Saviour and take courage.

This statement of the Saviour, made to Peter, has been rendered more remarkable still by the improper use made of it by the Papists. The word Peter, in Greek, signifies a *rock* or *stone*. Now a stone or rock may be employed as an image of perpetuity, because it is so enduring and indestructible. Hence, Christ turns his thoughts as he does on the mention of Peter's name; giving the assurance, and making the promise he does, in relation to his church. But the Papists have vainly ingrafted on this circumstance the doctrine that Peter is the head of the church, and that the popes, as his successors, are the vicegerents of God, and as such are sacred and infallible.

We are not told what happened while Jesus and the apostles were at Cesarea Philippi, nor with what success they preached there. Perhaps they did not make a long stay in the city. It was probably while they were there, or during their return to the southern parts of Galilee, that Jesus gave the apostles the first exact information in regard to the manner of his death; and it was in one of his conversations on this unwelcome subject that Peter took his Master in hand, and actually rebuked him for saying such things of himself. It was to Peter's unmerited rebuke that the Saviour replied, with a severity to which he was unaccustomed, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" It was also at the close of one of his discourses on this occasion, that the Saviour first predicted, with any considerable plainness, the coming unhappy fate of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish policy; and observed that all which he predicted would happen during the life-time of some of those who stood by and heard him.

We come now to the transfiguration of the Saviour. By the transfiguration, is meant the surprising change in his appearance which took place on a certain occasion when only a

few of his apostles were with him. The circumstances were as follows.

Either on their return from Cesarea Philippi or soon afterward, while the Saviour and his disciples were traveling along, they came near a mountain of considerable size. Some suppose it was Mount Tabor, but it is not certainly known what mountain it was. On coming near it, the Saviour, selecting Peter James and John for his special companions, ascended the mountain and retired for prayer.

While he was praying, a change in his appearance took place, corresponding to our earthly notions of celestial or angelic purity. His face shone like the sun, and his raiment became also as white as snow, and glistened and shone in the same manner. Moses and Elijah also made their appearance, and entered into conversation with Jesus. Under these new and amazing circumstances, and at the same time transfixed, as it were, with astonishment, hardly knowing what he said or did, Peter proposed to build three tabernacles there, one for each of the two visiters, and one for the Saviour.

This circumstance, which Jesus, in speaking of it calls a vision, the three disciples were

required to keep a profound secret, till after his resurrection. Though they were exceedingly puzzled to know what he meant by his resurrection, and were apparently unwilling to ask him about it, they kept the secret, according to his request.

Here, on this mountain, they appear to have staid about twenty-four hours. It is said by some writers that there were houses for prayer in the more retired places on the mountains of Palestine; and if so, it is not improbable that Jesus and his companions occupied, during the night, one of these houses. Where the rest of the apostles were it is difficult to say; or how the people of the country round about so soon and so generally heard of the return of the little company from the north. Certain it is, however, that they had heard of it; for Jesus and the three apostles no sooner descended from the mount of transfiguration, than they were met in great numbers by the multitude; who began to crowd upon them as usual.

Here a lunatic was brought to Jesus to be healed of his malady. It was a young person —a child as he is called—and his case was a most obstinate one, so much so, that it was

represented to the Saviour that his apostles could not cure him. Jesus, however, after gently reproving the apostles for their want of faith, effected the complete restoration of the lunatic, and delivered him sound again to his father.

We have already seen that up to this period, though the Saviour had traveled most in Galilee, he had not wholly abandoned Judea. Especially had he traveled there about the time of the feasts. But so troublesome to him had the people of Judea now become, especially when set on by their leaders, the priests and scribes, that he resolved to spend the remainder of his days chiefly in his native province of Galilee. Here, indeed, he had trouble enough; and his life, by reason of the multitudes that thronged him, had become as it were a burden to him, or would at least have become so had he been nothing more than human; yet he was not here in such imminent danger, every hour, of losing his life, as in Judea.

He now began, more frequently than formerly, to give his apostles information about his approaching crucifixion, and to prepare their minds and hearts for the event. They

did not, it is true, fully understand him. So firmly riveted still, was the notion that he was yet to be a temporal as well as a spiritual Messiah or deliverer, that they could not clearly comprehend what he said to them on the subject.

One day, as he and his apostles came into the city of Capernaum, they were met by the collectors of the sacred tribute—a tax which was collected every year for the support of the services of the temple at Jerusalem, and which was half a shekel, or about twenty-five or twenty-six cents. Does not your Master pay tribute? one of them asked Peter. He replied, Yes.

When the matter was mentioned to the Saviour, he showed to Peter, very plainly, that for himself, he was under no obligation to pay the tribute. However, as his refusal might be misconstrued by a class of persons, who are often disposed to shelter themselves in their neglect, under the example of somebody or other, and as it was a small sum, he concluded to pay it. A miracle was wrought, however, for the purpose. A fish was ordered to be caught with a hook, in whose mouth, after it was caught, was found a shekel of sil-

ver, with which Peter was required to pay his own and the Saviour's proportion of the tribute.

As they were traveling along one day, about this time, and the apostles were partly by themselves at a little distance from the Saviour, a dispute arose among them who should be the greatest in their Master's kingdom; for, as I have just told you, they could not yet get rid of the fond idea that he was to be a temporal prince among them, and have a temporal kingdom.

But Jesus perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, and the unchristian disposition they evinced, called them to account at the next house where they stopped. It was done in a way so striking, that they could not but remember the lesson it was intended to inculcate.

Having called them all around him, and told them that if any one desired to be first, it was fitting he should be last, he took a little child and deliberately set him in the midst of them. After the lapse of a few moments, to give opportunity, no doubt, for reflection, he took the child up in his arms, and observed, that unless they were converted to the confiding temper and unambitious character of

childhood, they could not enter his kingdom—the kingdom of heaven—and that if there were ranks in the kingdom of heaven, those would be considered first who were most humble, like infants and young children. He even repeated the sentiment; "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

The instructions he gave to the apostles on this occasion are exceedingly interesting. Some of his remarks were moreover peculiarly affecting; especially when he told them to beware lest they fell into the habit of despising little children. "For I say unto you," says he, "that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Jesus took the following opportunity to rebuke the spirit of uncharitableness or exclusiveness. The apostles informed him, one day, that they had seen a person who did not follow the Saviour casting out devils; and though he did it in *his* name, they had thought proper to forbid his doing so. This the Saviour did not approve. "There is no man," said he, "who shall do a miracle in my name,

that can lightly speak evil of me." "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water," he added, "in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

Among the instructions given in the same connection with the foregoing, were those in regard to the settlement of difficulties between brethren, the forgiveness of injuries, &c. Peter inquired on the latter point, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him; till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Excellent lesson! How few of us forgive to the four hundred and ninetieth time! Let us take shame and confusion of face to ourselves, on this account, and from henceforth begin to cultivate a better spirit.

CHAPTER XIV.

Jesus goes to Jerusalem at the feast of the tabernacles—His instructions in the temple—The Jews dissatisfied—They conspire to seize him, but are not permitted—Continues his instructions—Goes out at night to lodge—Why—The woman who had been accused of adultery brought to him—How he disposed of her—Resumes his instructions—They attempt to stone him—He effects his escape—Cure of a man born blind.

Another feast at Jerusalem—the Feast of Tabernacles—was at hand. As Jesus had been for some time traveling up and down Galilee, his relatives were desirous he should now go to the feast. The reasons they gave for it, however, were not their strongest reasons. His disciples in Judea, they observed—those who had been partly converted by him—needed his presence, that their faith might be strengthened and confirmed by hearing his instructions and seeing more of his mighty works.

This, I say, was the reason they gave; and perhaps it had some weight in their minds. There was, however, another reason, growing out of their own unbelief, which was probably more operative. They could not under-

stand how it was, that a person who claimed to be the real Messiah, and was *entitled* to make such a claim, should neglect to raise himself and his family to those stations to which during the reign of the true Messiah they would be entitled. They were therefore anxious to get him a little nearer to Jerusalem, the seat of temporal power.

Jesus did not wholly object to going to the feast, but only said that he was not yet ready. He urges his friends to go, however, and by no means to wait for him.

It seems that they followed his advice and concluded not to wait for him. They set out on their journey, at once; while he remained a little longer in Galilee. After a few days, however, he followed them, not openly, but rather privately, with the least possible company, and with little ceremony or noise.

As it was expected by the Jews at Jerusalem and in Judea generally, that Jesus would be present, there was quite a search for him during the first days of the feast. Both friends and enemies expressed great surprise that he did not make his appearance; the former wishing to see him and to have him on the spot to render his assistance in promoting the

good cause of truth, while the latter, believing him to be a bad man, pretended to be more confirmed in the belief that he was a deceiver than they ever had been before.

About the middle of the feast time Jesus arrived and made his appearance in the temple. Here he commenced, at once, his public course of instruction. The Jews marvelled at him; expressing at the same time great wonder at the extent and depth of his learning, not having been bred at any of their large, important, and highly distinguished seminaries. "How knoweth this man letters," said they, "having never learned?"

The replies of Jesus to these inquiries are all interesting and full of his accustomed wisdom, but I must pass them over. Suffice it to say, that the Jews were not satisfied. Some of them charged him, among other things, with having a devil; and finally attempted to lay violent hands upon him. But his hour had not yet arrived. They were not yet permitted to assail him with success, as long as more work remained for him to do.

Jesus, therefore, continued his instructions in the temple with the greatest freedom and boldness; some approving, others disapprov-

ing. The opposition party was steadily increasing, however, and a band of officers was actually ordered out, at length, to seize him and bring him to trial. But these officers were so abashed and awed by his presence, that they dared not, for a time, to take him. Perhaps, too, they were afraid of the indignation of the multitude; for, as we have already seen, there were sometimes mobs in those days as well as now.

When the officers who were to have taken the Saviour went back to the Sanhedrim or high court, under whose orders they acted, and the court perceived they had not brought the offender with them, they inquired the reason why. "Never man spake like this man," they answered.

How full of meaning their reply; and how true! No mere man since the world began, we may say even now, ever spake like the Saviour. More than this might in fact be said. Never man will speak like him.

We are not told what were the consequences of that official neglect of which I have been speaking, except that the Sanhedrim upbraided the delinquents, and charged them with being deceived by the Saviour's artful

and popular address. Perhaps more would have been done with them had not a difficulty arose—a sort of *word* quarrel—among the Sanhedrim themselves, which ended, for the time, in breaking up their proceedings; the judges going home and the officers going about their usual business.

Jesus, towards evening, went out to the Mount of Olives, in order to spend the night, as some suppose, in prayer. Or, it may be, that he went out as far as Bethany, a little beyond the highest part of the mount, and tarried with Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary who resided there. The last I think the more probable conjecture of the two. Perhaps, also, personal safety may have had some influence with him, in doing it. His hour had not yet come, I must observe once more; and until it had, he must use every natural means of safety as much as if he had been merely human.

One thing, at any rate, is quite obvious, which is, that the Saviour disliked the city. Do you ask, why, then, did he have so much to do with it? To benefit its inhabitants, is the appropriate reply; to effect a moral cleansing; to purify it. Bad as Jerusalem

was in many respects, it was a sort of nervous centre to Palestine; and such as were the sympathies of this centre, *such* in no small degree were the state and condition, for the time being, of the whole Jewish nation.

It is usually supposed that the population of Jerusalem, at the period of which I am now speaking, was immense. If it really contained three millions of people and several hundred synagogues, as some have supposed, it must certainly have been the theatre of much good and evil. The latter would not, it is believed, be diminished at the feast times. Such a bustle as must have been produced by the meeting together of a whole nation, as it were, at its capital, three times a year, and holding their sessions seven or eight days, could hardly be favorable to the virtue of the citizens, or their visitants. No wonder the Saviour seemed hardly willing to stay in it during the night, especially on such occasions of tumult, and so very glad to get out to the Mount of Olives, or to Bethany.

I do not know at how early an hour the temple was opened for the morning Jewish service; but Jesus, who seems to have been always an early riser, came back betimes

from his place of lodging, and renewed his public instructions. Nor were his labors confined to a small, stinted number of hearers there; for whatever their motives may have been, the multitude still continued to gather round him when he spake, whether in the temple or out of it. It is said that, at the time of which I am now speaking, "all the people came unto him." This *all the people* cannot of course mean to include all the city; for the temple would not have held them; but only all those who were there for morning worship; though it is probable the expression was designed to indicate that the number was very great.

While the Saviour sat there engaged in teaching, the Scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman who they said had been taken in the act of adultery; wishing to know what he would have done with her. Moses, they said, required that such criminals should be stoned; but what were his wishes? This was an artifice of these wicked men, by means of which they intended to get him into difficulty. For, if he should pronounce her innocent, they meant to accuse him to their rulers, as having no regard to the laws of his country;

whereas, if he pronounced her guilty—a thing, by the way, which as a mere human being it did not belong to him to do—they meant to complain of him to the Roman government. Thus, in one way or another, they were determined to entrap him.

But Jesus knew the human heart too well to be so easily ensnared as they supposed. Stooping down, he wrote on the ground, for some time, with his finger, as if he did not hear them. Meanwhile they continued, at intervals, to interrogate and to importune him; till he at last replied; "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

When he had said this, he continued his writing on the ground, leaving the Scribes and Pharisees to their reflections. They, poor men, were now in a most sad condition, ensnared by their own devices, and foiled with their own instruments. It is conjectured by some, that they were all guilty, in a greater or less degree, of the very crime they had charged on the woman, and that Jesus meant to intimate as much when he said, "He that is without sin among you,"—meaning the sin of adultery.

Worse than all, too, conscience, that powerful but bold accuser of secret crime, coming against them, they could not brave it out. Convicted of sin and ashamed, as it were, to look each other in the face, they stole away out of the temple, one after another, the older in years and in sin first, and the younger afterward, till Jesus and the woman were left alone in the midst of the crowd of spectators which had surrounded them, so anxious to know the results.

When they had all retired, Jesus ceased his writing and rose up. Seeing that the accusers of the woman had all disappeared, he said to her, "Where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She told him, no. "Neither do I condemn thee," he rejoined; "go, and sin no more."

It may seem to some of my readers, as if Jesus regarded this flagrant crime too lightly. But there is no evidence of this; none at all. It was not his business, I say again, to condemn her, as an earthly Judge. With earthly trials for crime, earthly acquittals and earthly condemnations, he had, as a matter of course, nothing at all to do. It is reserved for Him to pronounce sentence at the judgment of the *great* tribunal—the tribunal of the last day.

The closing piece of advice he gave her is sufficient to show that he did not make light of her transgression. "Go, and sin no more," implies that she had sinned; and he no doubt regarded her guilt as of a dye as much deeper than any human eye has ever regarded it, as Infinite Purity exceeds that purity which even in a John or a Peter was but the purity of a finite and imperfect being; and would still need washing in the atoning blood of the Redeemer.

Jesus continued his instructions in the temple—occasionally interrupted, however, by the inquiries and opposition of the Pharisees and others. It must be quite obvious to those who have paid much attention to these discourses of the Saviour, that they differ very essentially in their character from modern sermons, retaining more of the character of familiar but free and energetic discussion. Some of them were, undoubtedly, of great length, perhaps longer than any of our sermons; but generally they were not so; and many of them were short. Instead of being presented in the form of reflections or comments on a text or passage of Scripture, they were usually suggested by some passing event either ordinary or extraordinary. Perhaps his preaching from a

text, in Nazareth, at the commencement of his ministry, may indicate that he did not wholly neglect this mode of preaching. But even if he did not, he often discoursed otherwise, as I have already told you.

These discourses or discussions in the temple were by no means in vain. Like truth, when properly and faithfully presented—religious truth, I mean—it had the effect to sunder mankind, as with a sword, as Jesus sometimes expressed it. Some believed what he said, while others arrayed themselves against him, and would have laid hands upon him, but that "his hour" for departure to his Father, "was not yet come."

One charge was made against him at this time, which, so far as I can learn, was never made by his enemies at any other time, either before or afterward. It was that he was a Samaritan. They charged him also with having a demon or devil; but this was nothing new. They had made this charge repeatedly before.

I have said that they were not permitted to lay violent hands on him at this time; but they came very near it. Happening to speak of himself as existing before Abraham, they took offence immediately, and when he insist-

ed on it, that he was *really* before Abraham, they could refrain from violence no longer. They had even begun to gather stones to stone him, when Jesus, finding it proper to avoid their attack, passed out from among them, concealed in some way—perhaps miraculously—from their sight, and so for the present made his escape.

The next thing we hear of him was his miraculous cure of the person born blind. He made a species of clay, and applied it to his eyes, and bade him wash in the pool of Siloam, and he returned seeing.* This individual became ultimately a disciple of the truth, and of the Saviour.

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* The question has arisen, in the minds of many, why our Lord, in the performance of his miracles, made use of *instrumentalities*. It is sufficient, perhaps, in general, to say that such was his sovereign will and pleasure; and yet I am disposed to present a more particular answer, which I find in Bloomfield's Testament, in a note to page 187, of vol. I, Boston edition. The author, in speaking of this very miracle of curing the blind man, thus remarks:

"The reason" (why our Lord used these means) "was, no doubt, that assigned by most recent commentators, viz., that Christ was pleased, in condescension to human weakness, to use external actions significant of the cure to be performed; and thereby to strengthen the faith and confirm the hopes of the sick persons and those who brought them; and, moroever, to show them that the power he was about to exert, resided *in himself*. Our Lord adopted *these* actions, and also the usual one of laying his hands on the sick, in order to show that he was not confined to any one particular mode."

CHAPTER XV.

Feast of the dedication—Jesus attends it—Is again persecuted—Flies to Bethabara—Is sent for to go to Bethany—Raises Lazarus from the dead—Is again persecuted and obliged to retire—Another interview with the family at Bethany—The mission of the seventy disciples.

How much time elapsed between the events of the last chapter and those of the following, I find it difficult to determine. Nor is it perhaps of much importance that we should know the precise amount. The Saviour, during the intervals, was probably employed somewhere in the province of Judea; perhaps chiefly in the very neighborhood of Jerusalem.

At length, however, another feast was to be held. It was the feast of the dedication, as it was called. The Saviour was present. He walked—as the evangelist says, and probably gave instructions just at this time, while walking—in the porch of the temple.

Here the Jews again came around him, and importuned him to tell them plainly whether he was the Messiah. Jesus assured them that he had already told them, but that they

would not believe him; and after saying many things against them on account of their unbelief, he repeated his statements respecting his character, and closed his remarks by saying, "I and my Father are one."

Upon this, they boldly charged him with blasphemy, and notwithstanding his most masterly defence, they attempted again to stone him. Finding it impossible to do any thing more in Jerusalem, at present, he left the place and repaired eastward to Bethabara, on the river Jordan, where he had been baptized; where for some time he remained. It appears that he did not by any means discontinue his instructions while he remained there; for it is said expressly that many of the people believed on him.

I have spoken elsewhere of the possibility of his having become acquainted, before this time, with Lazarus and Martha and Mary, at Bethany. One of the reasons for this belief will now appear.

While he was at Bethabara, on the present occasion, word was brought to him from Martha and Mary, the two sisters, that Lazarus was sick. The message in the Scripture language was, "Lord, behold he whom thou

lovest is sick." A most manifest proof of an attachment to the family which must have arisen somehow and at some time or other. Those who are entire strangers to each other do not send such messages as this.

The distressed family did not ask the Saviour to come and see them, so far as it appears. It was enough to let him know their situation. A thousand requests, in such a case, would add little to the force of the errand. If he really loved the sick man, as is taken for granted, the message was sufficient. He would come just as quickly, to see him, as if much more had been said.

The object of Martha and Mary—their expectation rather—in all probability was, that Jesus would come and heal Lazarus, and that he would do so immediately. But he did not think it expedient to go immediately. Why he did not, cannot be told. There were good reasons for his delay, most undoubtedly. His apostles, we know, remonstrated against his going at all, on account of the danger from the Jews; but we cannot well suppose this, with him, was a cause of delay.

Bethabara and Bethany may have been about thirty miles apart. Jesus remained at

Bethabara, where he was, two days. The third day he set out on the journey, and probably arrived at the place either that day in the evening, or on the morning of the day following.

When he arrived with his apostles, he found the family in the deepest grief. Lazarus was dead; and it was now going on four days since he had expired. The affectionate and open-hearted Martha reminded Jesus, as soon as she saw him, of his delay, saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." This shows with what expectation the Saviour had been sent for. Her faith, as it appears, however, was not yet wholly gone. "I know that even now," she added, "whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

Lazarus had been buried away from the village a little way—near the public road; for it was not customary with the Jews—and should not be with any class of people—to bury their dead in the town or village. The place of interment was one of those little caves with which not only Mount Olivet but most of the hills and mountains of Palestine abound. A large stone had been placed at the mouth of it, after the burial.

Jesus had assured Martha almost as soon as he arrived, that her brother should rise again; but whether it was perfectly understood by her that he would be raised at this time, is not quite so clear. It is, however, most likely that it was so; for the Saviour and his apostles, and the two sisters, and a great concourse of spectators, were now leaving the house, and proceeding towards the grave.

There was, indeed, one natural obstacle in the way of his being raised again; at least it would occur to the friends as an obstacle, and appears to have been mentioned as such by Martha. This was that, as he had been dead several days, the body would by this time be corrupted. To this difficulty, however, if indeed she presented it as a difficulty, Jesus gave an appropriate and encouraging reply, and then proceeded to accomplish his work.

They were arrived at the spot. The sisters were weeping, Mary especially; and her Jewish friends were weeping with her. The scene was an affecting one. Who would not have wept! The Son of God was himself affected, even to tears. The Bible assures us of it in the most brief and yet most comprehensive language, "Jesus wept."

The stone, at the Saviour's request, was now removed from the grave; Jesus offered a prayer. It was a prayer of few words; but it was full of meaning. It was, moreover, an accepted prayer, as the prayers of Jesus to his Father always were.

When it was finished, the spectators were privileged to behold one of the most wonderful scenes—surpassed only by those at Sarepta and Nain, and those were private rather than public—which the world ever saw. "Lazarus, come forth!" said the Saviour, in a commanding tone of voice. The command was heard and obeyed. He who had been dead came forth; and having been released from the habiliments of the grave, was restored sound to his sisters and friends.

Such an event could not be without effect. Many of the Jews gave up their prejudices, and became the Saviour's disciples. Others, however, were only so much the more hardened. Their first concern was to inform the Pharisees—probably their leaders—what had been done, who, having collected the high court or Sanhedrim, held a consultation forthwith, to decide what was to be done. They acknowledged that Jesus did many miracles;

but there were other difficulties with them. "If we let him thus alone," they said, "all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

The result of the proceedings of the Sanhedrim, as might have been expected from what had been the result of some of their former meetings, was, they declared that the Saviour ought to be put to death. Of this result he was probably soon apprised; for he left the neighborhood, and went to Ephraim, a city somewhere in the vicinity of the river Jordan, where he remained with his disciples a long time.

This is not the last, however, which we hear of the family at Bethany. There is reason to believe that the Saviour made their house his home, whenever he was in Jerusalem afterward. On one occasion, when he called there, it is particularly mentioned that he found Martha greatly troubled about her household concerns, as well as somewhat fretful at her sister Mary, because she did not assist her enough in managing her domestic concerns. Jesus gave her much appropriate and very useful instruction; such as ought to

have cured her of her worldly-mindedness; and which, perhaps, did so. He also met a part of the family on another occasion at a feast in the same town of Bethany, not long before his death. But this will be mentioned in its place.

It was not far from the time of the miracle at Bethany, of which I have just been speaking, that Jesus paid one more visit to Galilee, his native region. Here he made new efforts for the conversion of his countrymen and with new success.

The number of permanent disciples in his company had by this period of his ministry considerably increased. In addition to the twelve, whom he had long since ordained to be apostles, there were about seventy others, who were prepared to execute important missions. They are called in the gospel narrative emphatically *the* seventy.

As eighty-three effective men could accomplish the tour of a country much sooner than a smaller number, and as the time for Jesus to be offered up was now at hand, and what was done under his particular direction must be done quickly, he proceeded to send out the seventy disciples to be missionaries

before him, just as he had formerly done the twelve; and accordingly he gave them all necessary instruction. Their instructions are preserved and recorded in the tenth chapter of the gospel according to Luke.

They executed their mission, in preparing the way for the Saviour, and in thus expediting his progress, to their own satisfaction, as well as to the satisfaction of the Saviour. They returned, it is said, with great joy; and their commission to preach, work miracles, and make converts, was renewed.

We do not know in what particular regions they traveled afterwards. If Luke was one of them we know something of his labors, as an individual; and the same might be said of the labors of several other individuals who are also supposed to have been of the number. But as to their labors, two by two, in Galilee or elsewhere, during the remainder of the time while our Lord lived, the divine record is silent.

CHAPTER XVI.

Jesus sets out for Jerusalem—Passes through Samaria—The Samaritans oppose him—Proposal of James and John—Conduct of our Saviour—Anecdotes and Reflections concerning him.

The time was now fast approaching when the Saviour was to be offered up a sacrifice for the sins of the world. This sacrifice was to be made in Jerusalem. It was, however, to be made in a particular way; and in order to effect it, there were to be agencies or instrumentalities.

In leaving Galilee the Saviour and his apostles, as was their more usual custom, passed through the province of Samaria. Coming near one of the Samaritan cities, on a certain occasion, and the apostles being a little in advance of the Saviour and having announced his approach, the people would not let him pass.

What was now to be done? A proposal was made by James and John, at which, had it come from Peter, we should not, in all probability, be much surprised; though we should not so soon have expected it from the milder and more calm sons of Zebedee.

But what was the proposal? Nothing less, to be sure, than to call down fire from heaven to destroy the opposition; something in the manner of Elijah in treating with the enemies of God at Mount Carmel. A most singular plan, under the gospel dispensation, to be formed by men so thoroughly imbued with the gospel spirit! It serves, it is true, to show that men are still but men—for some time, too, fallible men—even after a genuine work of grace has been begun in their hearts.

Was the proposal of James and John accepted by the Saviour? Far enough from it. Not only was it not accepted, he even rebuked the two apostles for proposing it, assuring them, in his plain but forcible manner, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

And as he spoke and felt so he acted. The Saviour did not say one thing by his words, and another by his actions.* Instead of at-

* Most men, even of the better sort, live two lives, as it were, at the same time; one external, the other internal. The internal is that of the feelings and thoughts, which is often hid from the world, and known only to God. The other is external, and may or may not correspond to the internal, according as the man is or is not what he seems to be. Both the external and the internal, in our Saviour, exactly corresponded.

tempting to force his way directly through the village, as some would have done, especially with the power he possessed, he turned aside with his company, and passed through another village. Excellent lesson for us all to study; and in our journey through life, may we ever be governed by the same spirit!

It was at about this period of the life and travels of our Saviour, that a lawyer came to him one day, and begged him to tell him what he ought to do to gain eternal life He was told by Jesus to keep the commandments. It was on this occasion, that, in explanation of the term, neighbor—Jesus having required him to love his neighbor—the parable or story of the good Samaritan was related.

The form of prayer, given by our Saviour, and commonly known by the name of the Lord's prayer, was probably taught to the apostles during this journey upward to Jerusalem. It seems from the general tenor of the sacred narrative, that the Saviour and his company did not attempt at this time to go through Samaria; but crossing the river Jordan, through Decapolis, they passed along the eastern side of that river. It also appears that he did not go directly to Jerusalem, but

lingered some time in the neighborhood of the Jordan, or in the more remote, eastern parts of the province of Judea, teaching, preaching, and working miracles, as before.

One day he was invited to take dinner with a Pharisee. He accepted the invitation, and sat immediately down, without complying with the Jewish custom of washing. At this the Pharisee wondered, and even manifested a disposition to complain. The Saviour embraced the opportunity to give to the Pharisee a just view of the general character of the sect to which he belonged; showing him that they were not only superficial and proud, but also hypocritical. "Ye make clean," said he, "the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of extortion and excess;" and then proceeded to pronounce upon them, for their sins, a series of woes so terrible as almost to make one's blood run cold.

What! was he so impolite, some one may perhaps ask, as to come out in this way upon the Pharisees, just after one of their sect had kindly invited him to dine with him? He certainly was so. He did not personally *abuse* the Pharisee, proud as he undoubtedly

was; but he dealt plainly with him—very plainly. Besides, he was aiming at his nation more, much more, than at the particular individual whose hospitalities he was sharing.

A lawyer* who was present, observed to the Saviour that by some of his remarks he seemed to cast reproach upon him and his brethren. The Saviour did not deny it. Nay, even more than this; he immediately pronounced a series of woes on the lawyers of the day—the Jewish lawyers, of course—and endeavored to show, and that with entire success, that they were a set of exceedingly bad men; and needed complete and thorough reformation.

Again the crowd of people that followed him became so large, as to prove not only an annoyance to him and his apostles, but to each other. It was so very great, and so exceedingly dense and confused, that, as the sacred narrative expresses it, they actually trod upon one another. To make the confusion, if possible, still worse, the Saviour was perpetually assailed by all sorts of inquiries,

* The young reader should have been informed, before now, that among the Jews, a lawyer was one who made it his business to study the moral and ceremonial law—the Mosaic law, I mean, and not, as with us, the law of the land merely.

wherever he went; as well as involved in all sorts of discussions.

The leading object of one class was to catch something out of his mouth, that they might be able to accuse him; of another to be healed of infirmities, or obtain favors of one kind or another for friends either present or absent; of another to learn his doctrines; and of another still to obtain his advice, in the settlement of petty disputes and quarrels.

All his answers, when answers were given, were not only adapted, with incomparable wisdom, to the cases of the individual or individuals for whom they were directly intended; but they were also so framed as to convey useful moral instruction to all who heard them, and even, by means of the record of them, to us, at this distant period, as well as to all our race down to the end of time.

More than even this was accomplished. As a general rule, the questions which were asked, with the replies made, and perhaps the conversation too which followed, were the introduction to other valuable instruction; sometimes to the extent, almost, of a sermon. Of course, as I have repeatedly said, it is no part of my purpose to insert them; not even

in every instance, so much as sketches of them. The parable of the barren fig-tree; the resemblance of the kingdom of heaven to mustard seed, leaven, &c., and the conversation and event which occurred at the cure of the woman who had been infirm eighteen years, are instances of the kind in question.

The Saviour was still journeying slowly onward towards Jerusalem. The scripture language respecting him at this time is, "He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem."

Some of the Pharisees who were in the crowd, in view of the fact that he was now so near Jerusalem, admonished him, one day, of his danger from Herod, to which the Saviour replied; "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless, I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem!"

What severity on the nation of which Jerusalem was the proud capital! Yet this was not all. It was on this occasion that he uttered those terrible woes against Jerusalem as having stoned and killed the prophets,

which no person, adult or child, who has once read them, can ever forget—woes, however, which were literally fulfilled.

Several of the acts of our Saviour, while on his present journey, were performed on the Sabbath. These always awakened more hostility—much more—than those which were performed on other days, and involved him, at times, in more immediate danger. These last, however, it was not so difficult for him to avoid, as the still more terrible storm which was rising upon him at a distance, and which he neither expected nor wished to escape—a storm which he had descended from heaven to earth in due time to encounter.

It was on this journey—so I believe, that he gave forth the parable of the supper, of the hundred sheep, of the ten pieces of silver, of the repenting prodigal, of the unjust steward, and of the unjust judge. It was also at the commencement of this journey that he met and cured the ten lepers, had a long conversation with the Pharisees about marriage, compared the kingdom of heaven to a householder, &c., &c.

It was also in the progress of this journey, and as they were approaching Jerusalem, that

the apostles are represented as being amazed and also afraid. Why they were so is not expressly said; probably it was because the Saviour persevered in going up to Jerusalem, in view of the dangers which were now staring him in his face, and with which they well knew he was perfectly acquainted. He took them aside, indeed, from the multitude and endeavored to explain the matter to them; but they did not fully understand him. How could they? It is a mystery which we at this day, the wisest of us, hardly understand. Rather, as perhaps I ought to say, there are mysteries connected with the subjects of the Saviour's death, which to us eighteen hundred years later, are almost as inexplicable, as they were to the twelve apostles. What we do not understand now, however, we hope to understand hereafter. "Let us then hold fast the profession of our faith," as James says, "without wavering."

CHAPTER XVII.

The Saviour comes near Jericho—Cures two blind men—Story of Zaccheus—The company go on to Jerusalem—People come out to meet them—The multitude manifest their joy—Jesus rides into the city—The whole city in motion.

The Saviour and his company were now near Jericho. Jericho was about twenty miles a little north of east from Jerusalem, on the road from the river Jordan to the latter place; and though it had fallen from its former greatness, it was still a city of considerable size, even as late as the times of our Saviour.

Here the Saviour cured a blind man. This blind man was particularly remarkable for the faith he manifested in the Being who had restored him. The miracle made a great noise, and the multitude of the people that followed him, whether from Jericho or elsewhere, gave much praise to God.

Jesus, continuing his journey, passed through the city of Jericho; but as he went out of the city at the western gate, another blind man cried after him. His name was

Bartimeus. He had heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by; and in spite of the multitude, who did all they could by the force of persuasion, to stifle his cries, he was determined to be heard. The Saviour called him, and finding his faith strong, he healed him. This man appears to have afterwards become one of his permanent followers.

Reader, have you ever thought how important it is, that you should persevere in your endeavors to obtain of the Saviour that spiritual sight which you so greatly need? Learn, O learn, then, from this passage, the amazing importance of earnestness and importunity. The Saviour is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and is as ready to-day as he was eighteen hundred years ago, to grant a favorable answer to all who seek with earnestness to have their spiritual eyes opened.

Another circumstance of importance took place while Jesus was at or near Jericho. There was a man in Jericho, whose name was Zaccheus, who was not only a man of distinction—a chief of the publicans—but he was also quite wealthy. He, too, like many other persons, was anxious to see the Saviour, but could not well do it on account of his small

stature, and the difficulty of passing into the interior of the crowd. Perhaps he was anxious to see him at first, as a matter of mere curiosity; for such, in fact, was the case with many who, like him, became afterwards our Saviour's faithful disciples.

At all events he was determined to see him. On the road where he expected he would soon pass, was a large sycamore tree. This tree Zaccheus was resolved to climb, and there, without being annoyed by the crowd, await patiently the Saviour's arrival. If some of the people of the city smiled to see as great a man as Zaccheus climbing a sycamore tree to look down upon a crowd of travelers, as very possibly they did, still this consideration did not deter him from executing his purpose.

Jesus, in the midst of the dense crowd, at last approaches. Zaccheus's curiosity is gratified in beholding him. But this is not all. He who has in his hands the destinies of all men, has touched the secret springs of the publican's heart. Jesus bids him come down, and he will stop, for the day, at his house. Zaccheus accordingly descends from the tree, and receives him with great joy.

From what followed during the interview, there is every reason to believe that Zaccheus became a converted man. One evidence of this is found in the fact that he forthwith gave away, for the benefit of the poor, half his property and made restoration in large measures, for every wrong which in the prosecution of the duties of his office he had inflicted. His sincerity and repentance seem also to have been acceptable; and to have been approved by the Saviour.

After leaving the house of Zaccheus and proceeding on his journey, Jesus related to his followers the interesting parable of the nobleman, who, on going into a far country, left with his servants different sums, to be applied in trade during his absence, some having ten pounds, some five, some two, &c. The results are well known, and need not be repeated; but I beg every young reader to study the parable and think of its meaning and intention. It is one of no ordinary interest and importance.

The whole company were now rapidly approaching Jerusalem. What must have been the feelings of the Saviour, knowing as he did, perfectly well, that his hour was now near, and

that he was traversing the road from Jericho to Jerusalem—this remote part of it, at least, —for the last time!

Had there been any one of his whole number, even of the twelve apostles, to sympathize with him, the painful circumstances of his situation—viewing him as human merely—would have been somewhat mitigated. But his disciples could none of them sympathize much with him, for they did not as yet fully understand him.

The feast of the passover was at hand, and as very many of the Jews came together at Jerusalem, a short time beforehand, to purify themselves, the question arose among them, whether Jesus would or would not dare to make his appearance. They were the more in doubt, because a strict charge or decree had been issued by the chief priests and Pharisees, to have any individual who knew where Jesus was give them the information, that he might be apprehended.

But Jesus was now drawing near to Jerusalem, having passed with the crowd, quite beyond Bethany. Many of the people at Jerusalem, who were there to make preparation for the feast, when they heard that he was com-

ing, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth from the eastern gate to meet him, crying, "Hosanna;" and saying, "Blessed is the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord."

As the Saviour drew still nearer to Jerusalem, having reached that part of the mount of Olives which is crossed by the road from Bethany to Bethphage, he sent two of his apostles into a village that lay near by for a beast to ride on; for though he generally—I might almost say *always*—walked, yet was he resolved to enter Jerusalem, at the present time, in a public, triumphant manner. The animal sent for was procured, at length, and when they had laid proper garments upon it, they sat Jesus thereon, and in this way he advanced towards the city.

As he proceeded along the road and was now not far from Bethphage and in full view of Jerusalem, the multitude which were about him—many of whom in all probability still thought he was entering Jerusalem as their king—began to show their respect by throwing down their very garments in the path before him. A larger number, however, contented themselves by cutting down small branches

of trees,* and procuring flowers and strewing them along the road. Anon, moreover, they begin to shout, and to say with a loud voice, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," &c.

One reason why the people came out of the city to meet Jesus was, that they had heard of the miracle at Bethany, which had taken place some time before, and wished to know the truth of it. To this not a few of those who were present in the company, could testify; for they had witnessed it.

The chief priests and Pharisees, quite out of patience with what took place, said among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him!" Thus it often is with those who persecute their fellow-men. The more they do, the more the mass of the people sympathize with those on whom the persecution falls. It is of less consequence to the multitude, in general, who are right or who are wrong than who is the sufferer; for their sympathies will usually go

* These branches of trees, many of which were branches of the palm, were such as in those days it was customary to procure in honor of a victorious general or prince. They were therefore deemed, by the multitude, exceedingly proper on the present occasion.

with the persecuted, let their character, in general, be what it may.*

Some of the Pharisees, finding they could make no impression by speaking to them to be silent, requested the Saviour himself to do it; "Master," they said, "rebuke thy disciples." Though as little fond of display as any individual that ever lived, he did not choose to comply with their request. "If these should hold their peace," he observed, "the stones would immediately cry out."

In descending mount Olivet, to cross the valley of Jehosaphat, which separates that mountain or hill from the city of Jerusalem, the latter is in full view, and the prospect is grand and imposing. As Jesus beheld the city, he wept over it; and it was here that he predicted that destruction by the Romans which should not leave one stone of the temple upon another; a prediction which was in due time literally fulfilled.

Jesus at length arrives at the city gate, and

* As feeling, mere feeling, undirected by reason, is usually blind, so is sympathy. We ought, indeed, to be very thankful to God for both of these inestimable gifts—the power to feel for our fellow-creatures, and the power to sympathize with them. But we ought to do one thing more; which is to be very careful that our sympathies do not mislead us.

enters the city. So remarkable was the manner of his appearance, and so great was the crowd which accompanied him, that the whole city seemed moved; and the inquiry every where was, Who is this? Who can it be that enters our city with so much pomp, and in the midst of such acclamations? The multitude informed them that it was Jesus of Nazareth, the individual whose fame, especially as a worker of miracles, had been so long noised among them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Saviour curing the blind and lame—The fig-tree cursed; and why—He again drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple—Discussions with the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees—The Scribes and Pharisees denounced—The benevolent widow.

When the Saviour had fairly entered the city, and all was quiet, he went into the temple, and again commenced his miracles and instructions there. Among other things, he wrought the cure of the blind and lame who were brought there for the purpose.

These cures and the cries of Hosanna to the Son of David, which were renewed at intervals, offended the chief priests and scribes; but as yet they made no attempts to seize him.

At the close of the day, he repaired, with the twelve, to Bethany, probably to the house of Lazarus, Martha and Mary; and there remained for the night.* Early in the morning they returned again to the city.

As they were returning—setting out, as perhaps they did, before breakfast—the Saviour was hungry, and seeing a fig-tree at a distance, he sought for fruit on it, but as it was not the season for fruit he found none.

I have alluded to a barren fig-tree, in another place; but the circumstances, though they strongly resembled those to which I now refer, were yet somewhat different. It was in the present instance that Jesus is said to have appointed the tree to perish, and that it was found on the following day actually to have withered.

Some of those persons who are ever ready to find fault with the Bible—its doctrines and its instructions—have complained of the con-

* See page 161.

duct of our Saviour in the present instance. But they misunderstand the whole matter. The act was unquestionably emblematical of the decay which awaited the Jewish nation, in consequence of their unfaithfulness and spiritual barrenness. No serious injury can be said to have been done to the fig-tree, unless we suppose it to have been endowed with sensation; besides, had not the Being by whom it was created, a right to destroy it, especially when he could, in so doing, inculcate a valuable moral lesson?

I do not doubt that the destruction of this fig-tree was also intended to convey a moral lesson to every one of us. Here we have lived for years and years—some of us for tens or scores of years—in the vineyard of our Lord and Master. Have we brought forth the appropriate fruits of Christianity in a holy life and conversation? If not, is not the destruction of the fig-tree emblematical of the destruction that awaits us?

The Saviour now entered upon his second day's work in the temple. The first business of this morning was to clear the temple, as he had done on a former similar occasion, of business men and business. Not only did he

stop all the traffic in lambs, doves, &c., but he went further, and overthrew the tables and seats of the traders and traffickers, and would not permit a vessel of any sort to be carried through the temple. "Is it not written," said he, "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

The scribes and chief priests grew more and more offended both with him and his doctrine; but it was difficult for them to seize him, on account of the singular attachment of the mass of the people. Besides, these wicked men were aware of the excellence of his doctrine, and the holiness—the mingled majesty and meekness of his character, and awed by his personal appearance. They were, in fact, afraid of him. Such power and authority have truth and goodness, especially when they come from the fountain head, when manifested *directly* by their divine Author.

Jesus and his apostles, at evening, went again out of the city—without doubt, to the house of Lazarus at Bethany. Here they probably resorted every night till the very night in which, by the treachery of Judas Iscariot, he was betrayed to his enemies.

The next morning—the morning of the third day of the feast—Jesus and his apostles came again to Jerusalem. While walking about the temple, conversing and preaching, he was met by some of the chief priests, sent, no doubt, by the great Jewish council, or Sanhedrim, to take him. They were afraid, however, as I have already told you, to execute the decree of the Sanhedrim, on account of the people. It became necessary, therefore, to contrive some sort of accusation against him, which would so far satisfy the people, that he could be taken without raising at once a mob, and perhaps involving even the temple itself in danger.

Accordingly they employed agents to question and cross question him in the temple, in the hearing of all the people; in order that if he made any blunders, apparent or real, they might observe it.

They asked him the following questions; "By what authority doest thou these things; and who gave thee this authority?" Jesus, perceiving their design to entrap him, replied in such a way as entirely defeated their purpose. He would answer their question, he said, if they would answer him a question re-

specting the baptism of John Baptist; viz. Was it from heaven or of men? This question they were unwilling to answer; he therefore refused to reply to theirs.

But this was not all. He censured them, in the presence of the very multitude to whom they hoped to have exposed him, on account of their neglect of the instructions of a man whom they professed so strongly to regard.

It was here that he recited that most solemn parable, which shows how the various dispensations of God towards the Jewish people were abused; how his only Son had at last been sent to them; and the dangers which were in reserve for them, if, in like manner, they rejected him. They understood his meaning, and were greatly enraged; but, as yet, they dared not to destroy him.

But they did not relinquish their original purpose of "entangling him in his talk." Many and curious were their devices for this purpose. Among the rest was their question, whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. We must all have observed how dextrously he managed that matter; and with how much disappointment they gave up, for that day, their object.

When the Pharisees had left him, however, he met with a company of Sadducees. The Sadducees were a sect of the Jews who denied the doctrine of a future resurrection, a future state, &c., and held that there was no such thing as an angel or a spirit. They brought to him a question about marriage in the future state, but this the Saviour soon disposed of.

Again the Pharisees assembled round him. In his turn, however, for surely his turn had now come, he proposed perplexing questions to them. They were soon glad to leave him, for they could not answer his questions without being caught in the very same sort of snare which they were perpetually laying for him.

The common people, we are told several times, heard the Saviour gladly. It was their leaders, as a general thing, that made the trouble he had to encounter. Sometimes, indeed, they contrived to enlist the multitude, under their banner. On the present occasion the Saviour addressed himself particularly to this class of people, but not till he had first cautioned the common people against them in the following manner.

"The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's

seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do ye not after their works; for they say and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi! Rabbi!—But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

Thus did the Saviour, for once, caution the multitude against their leaders. But he had not yet done his work. Turning to the Scribes and Pharisees themselves, in the presence of all those who chose to hear him, he denounced them, in an address, than which, as it has been justly said, "nothing more fearfully tremen-

dous is recorded in the whole history of eloquence." The denunciation may be seen at full length in the 23d chapter of Matthew; from which I only make a few extracts.

"But wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Wo unto you, Scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Wo unto you, Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two fold more the child of hell than yourselves. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but within they are full of extortion and excess. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so ye also appear outwardly righteous unto men; but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

The boldness, the personality, the prophet-like tone of this urgent yet unimpassioned rebuke, as it has been well observed by another writer, "impart to it such a power that it can hardly be read without trembling, and must have made it unspeakably awful in the delivery. It seems to have been listened to in deathlike silence. No one presumed to interrupt or reply to it. Scribe, Pharisee, Sadducee—all, all were alike, as there can be no doubt, overwhelmed, not only by the eloquence of the speaker, but by the truth which he uttered."

Indeed, I cannot help thinking there was something in the manner of this address infinitely above mere eloquence. There was eloquence, it is true; but there was more. There was holiness, holiness embodied, as it were—acting and reproving where reproof was known and felt to be deserved. No wonder, I again say, at the impression he was wont to make by these addresses. No wonder those who heard him sometimes said, "Never man spake like this man."

Jesus now proceeded to teach the astonished hearers a lesson of a very different kind. As he sat where he could observe those who cast

their offerings into the treasury for the use and support of the temple, he could not help noticing the strange inequality with which these matters were managed. The rich he saw cast in, as it is usually called, liberally; yet were they not at all impoverished or inconvenienced by their contributions. There still remained, to them and their families, not only every necessary of life, real or supposed, but every luxury. At length along came a poor widow, with all she had in the world for her support in her hand. It was a single Roman farthing, or about four mills. This, though her all, as I have said, was also cast in. Our Saviour reminded those around him of the circumstance, and told them that while others had indeed given something from their abundance, she had given more than they all. She had given what was really needed to supply the necessities of the giver; but this not one of them had done, notwithstanding all their wealth and all their supposed liberality.

O how sadly will many men, who have all along through life supposed themselves charitable and liberal, be disappointed, when they come to find that as things are estimated in the sight of God they have really given just

nothing at all. They have never, once in their lives, put themselves to any real inconvenience by their charities. They have denied themselves nothing; they have made no sacrifices. Where, then, is any evidence of real benevolence? Where any evidence that they possess the spirit of the Saviour?

CHAPTER XIX.

The Saviour in going to Bethany stops at mount Olivet—Views the city—Pronounces judgments on it, and gives his apostles much instruction—Foretells more particularly his death—Proceeds to Bethany—Attends a feast there—The box of ointment—Judas Iscariot—His character and conduct.

One evening, as the Saviour and his apostles were proceeding as usual to their lodging place in Bethany, having crossed the brook Kidron which runs through the valley of Jehosaphat, and ascended the mount of Olives, where from a point, somewhat elevated, there is a fine view of Jerusalem, they sat down awhile to take a survey of this magnificent but devoted city.

While sitting there, Peter, James and John came to the Saviour, and without intending the

rest should hear what was said, asked him to tell them when the destruction of the city and of the Jewish policy should take place, and what would be the sign of the Saviour's coming, for that purpose, and of the end of the world. They believed, most undoubtedly, that the Messiah, whom they had so long expected, was to establish a new dispensation or age, upon the introduction of which the old one, or that of Moses, would cease.

The answer of the Saviour to these queries is of very great length, and cannot here be repeated. It is sufficient perhaps that I give a mere outline of it; for if the reader has a clear idea of the face of the country about Jerusalem and of the relative position of that city and mount Olivet, and will picture to himself, by aid of a lively imagination, the circumstances, under which the remarks of the Saviour were made, he will hardly need any thing else to deepen the impression made by what the Saviour uttered.

He warned them, in the first place, not to be deceived by the false Christs or Messiahs who would arise among them. In the second place, he foretold the commotions and wars which would take place before the destruction

of Jerusalem should be effected; and in the third place, he prophesied, with the exactness almost of an historian, respecting the events which should take place at the time of the siege and desolation of the city of Jerusalem by the Roman army.

He urged them, moreover, to be prepared for the event. To deepen their impressions of the importance of faithfulness, fidelity and perseverance in Christian duty, as the most important preparation for that great day of national trouble, as well as for all the smaller troubles of life, he gave them many striking admonitions, and interesting and instructive parables, among the last of which was the parable of the ten virgins. Finally, he passed from the destruction of Jerusalem and a due preparation for that great event, to the destruction of the world in which we live and the judgment of the last day; and spoke of the proper Christian preparation for a scene so awfully tremendous and so unspeakably important.

I have been the more inclined to give this outline, because it is believed to have been his last public discourse. Here on the western side of mount Olivet, but near its summit,

in the midst of his apostles and perhaps many more individuals—for though the conversation began with only three of them, I cannot think the rest were long absent—here, I say, on that hill, which he had so many times ascended and descended, and in full view of the city for which he had labored and prayed and wept so much and so long, and in the heart of which he was so soon to bleed for its millions and the other millions of the world in all ages and nations; here, in full view of Jerusalem, I say, its strong walls, its splendid palaces, and its magnificent temple illuminated and perhaps gilded by the lingering rays of the setting sun, the Saviour of mankind uttered his last public counsels before his crucifixion. Here was heard from the lips of him "who spake as never man spake," his last fearful warning, and to a guilty nation and an impenitent world, his most terrible predictions of judgments here or hereafter.

The Saviour's discourse being ended, he reminded his apostles that it was now but two days to the feast of the passover, at which time he should be betrayed and put to death. And yet, in spite of his frequent admonitions, it appears from circumstances which will be

noticed hereafter, that as yet they but imperfectly understood him.

But as night was now drawing on, they proceeded again to Bethany. In the evening they were invited by one Simon a leper, as he was called, to a public feast or supper. Simon's hospitality was accepted, and Jesus and his company attended. Who the other guests were, except two or three, is not so certain; though it is probable from what followed this event, that a considerable number of Simon's Jewish friends were present.

I have alluded to two or three of the guests. These were Lazarus and his sisters. For though it was not customary, in that country and in those days, for females to sit at the same table with males, yet they sometimes served, as it was called: and on the present occasion the honor of serving was committed to Martha.

Nor was Mary unoccupied. For while they were in the midst of the supper, she came boldly to Jesus with a box of very costly ointment; and having broken the seal, she poured the contents at once on his head; at the same time anointing his feet with it, and wiping them with her hair.

This method of anointing would not seem strange to us if we knew the customs of the country and of the times. For anointing with oil was quite common, though it was not usual to do it with such costly ointment. The box of ointment, it is said, might have been sold for three hundred pence, that is for above forty dollars.

Who will wonder, then, to hear that the time-serving and money-loving Judas Iscariot was ready to complain of it as a waste? It might have been sold, he said, and given to the poor. True; but so might many of the things they were perpetually using; and some of those, in all probability, of which Judas himself was in the daily use. Christ would not—and I would not, of course—be found justifying prodigality or waste. But is there not something of inconsistency in crying out against an occasional anointing of the living body of one so eminent and precious as the Saviour, while we are daily contributing to a far greater waste on living as well as dead bodies?

The truth, however, is, that this plea in behalf of the poor—when any thing is applied in a manner which may seem to us even a little extravagant—is not made chiefly because we

are so much opposed to a little waste; but for other reasons. Give *us* but the handling of the money or property thus wasted, as we call it, and though we might not handle it in the *same* way, it is ten to one but we should spend it in a way quite as selfish. And so it was, no doubt, with Judas. He was a selfish man, like other selfish men; only, as we have reason to believe, a little more distinguished for his selfishness than most of us.

The Saviour defended the conduct of Mary, in this instance, until the complainers were at length silent. But Judas, though silent, was not satisfied. He was, as I have said again and again, the treasurer of the company; and though they do not seem to have been at this time in immediate want, he would gladly have replenished the purse he carried with a sum of money, which, for those days, would have been quite considerable. Nor was this all; he was anxious, in all probability, to gratify himself to a greater extent than their small funds would at all times enable him to do, even with the addition of that species of pilfering with which one of the Evangelists charges him. Nor is it at all improbable that the remarks of our Saviour, on this occasion,

instead of doing him good, as they ought to have done, served to urge him onward in a course of selfishness and dishonesty, till it ended in treason or in the betrayal of his constant companion—his professed friend—his Lord and Master. Good instruction and counsel, if they do not prove a savor of life, always become a savor of death to us all.

And now it was that Judas was ready, by and with the assistance of the grand adversary of all good—the arch traitor against Heaven—to hearken to a proposal of the wicked leaders of the Jews, to give up Jesus into their hands. The man who has begun a course of wickedness, if it is only a little stealing now and then, knows not where the matter will end.

The leaders of the Jews had just now assembled together to concert new plans for securing Jesus, the old ones, it seems, having failed. Just at this time Judas appeared among them, and inquired how much they would give him to deliver the Saviour up into their hands. A bargain was soon struck. The sum agreed on was thirty pieces of silver; a little more, perhaps, than fifteen dollars.*

* About $15\frac{2}{3}$, to be exact; so it seems from the authority of Calmet.

A small sum, indeed, for delivering up his and their and our Lord and Master and Redeemer!

From this time forth Judas watched for an opportunity, when the multitude was absent, to give up the Saviour to those who for aught he knew were to be his murderers. Was there ever wickedness so premeditated? Was there ever a traitor so foul? Was there ever a man so deserving of being execrated? To whom is not the very name Judas (and especially the two names together, Judas Iscariot) an offence? Who would venture to call a member of his family by this name? At all events, who has ever done it?

CHAPTER XX.

Preparation for the Passover—Manner of keeping it—Institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper—The Saviour washes the apostles' feet—Adventure with Peter—Judas leaves the company—Discourses of the Saviour—They depart from Jerusalem—Go to the garden of Gethsemane—What took place there.

The day of the passover was now rapidly approaching, and Jesus began to make prepa-

ration for it. He wished to keep it by himself, having none present at the time but his twelve apostles. The Passover, as you are aware, must be eaten in Jerusalem. Accordingly, he sent Peter and John from Bethany to procure a room and make the necessary preparation.

The circumstances of the journey of those two disciples, though somewhat singular, it is unnecessary for me to relate. I must confine myself, as much as possible, to incidents and events more directly connected with the Saviour himself. It is only needful to observe that they secured a large upper room, already well furnished for their purpose; and that they immediately made ready the unleavened cakes, the lamb, the herbs, &c., usual on such occasions.

In the evening, when the proper hour had arrived, for commencing this feast—to the Jews so sacred—Jesus and his apostles proceeded to the place made ready for them by Peter and John, and there sat down together at the table.

The first thing to be eaten—to comply with the customs of the Jews—was the bread and bitter herbs. After these came

the lamb. Or to be a little more particular, —it was customary for the master of the family about to celebrate the passover—who in the present case was the Saviour—to begin the feast with a cup of wine; which having blessed in a solemn manner, he passed among the guests at the table. After this, he washed his hands, and then proceeded to other duties.

When the master and the rest of the company had tasted the bread and herbs, it was usual for some younger person present to ask the meaning of the peculiarities of this feast of the passover. After an explanation of the same, the master of the feast arose, took another cup of wine, and again washed his hands.

The eating of the lamb, which properly constituted the feast of the passover, was followed by another cup of wine. This was succeeded by serious but friendly conversation; after which was a fourth cup, followed by a psalm of praise, which ended the solemnity.

In the present instance, it appears that at the time when it was usual for the lamb to be eaten, the Saviour gave to each of his apostles, as they were collected around him, a piece of bread, either in place of a piece of

the lamb, or immediately after it; and the wine which he drank and distributed as the sacrament, corresponded to the fourth cup of the Passover.

In any event here was the origin of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper—which consists essentially in receiving bodily sustenance in a social manner, in remembrance of the sufferings and death of Him whose body, the day after he last partook of the Passover at Jerusalem, was broken on the cross to atone for the sins of a perishing world; and whenever this sacrament is partaken of, to the end of the world, it should bring these facts into grateful remembrance.

It has been already mentioned that the apostles, in one or two instances, were found by the Saviour at variance in regard to precedence. Here, strange to say, at this very supper, or rather at one of the intervals of the supper, the same old strife, which should be the greatest, again recurred. To effect a final and complete cure of these dissensions, and especially to present, as it were, his dying testimony against them, the Saviour, on rising from supper at its close, adopted the following method.

Laying aside his upper or loose garment, and fastening a towel around him, he proceeded, without apology and without much ceremony, to wash the feet of his disciples, and to wipe them afterward with his towel. It was not long before he came to Peter. But Peter disliking the idea of having the Saviour perform so menial an office for him, expressed his surprise. "Lord," said he, "dost thou wash my feet?" The reply of Jesus, that though he might not be able to understand just now, the meaning of the ceremony, he would probably understand it better afterward, did not satisfy him. He even refused to suffer the Saviour to proceed. This called forth the following appropriate and just reply; "If I wash thee not," replied the Saviour, "thou hast no part with me."

This was enough for Peter. Quick as thought, the whole current of feeling was changed. He was not only willing to have his feet washed, since it concerned his salvation, but also his hands and his head. The Saviour assured him that no more was necessary than to wash his feet in order to answer every purpose which he himself had intended by the ceremony.

The purpose of the Saviour was to teach his disciples humility; the lesson too was a beautiful one, and we cannot doubt made its intended impression. The ceremony was followed by quite a long and interesting discourse from our Saviour, explaining his object, and giving his apostles much collateral and useful instruction.

During the supper, the Saviour also foretold again his betrayal, and almost pointed out to them his very betrayer. But either they did not very fully understand him even now, or else they could not fully believe that Judas was capable of such great and aggravated wickedness.

But Judas was now ready for any thing, however diabolical in its nature, provided it would accomplish his purposes. He was bent on having the money which had been promised him; and as is the usual effect of money, in a greater or less degree, even the thinking of it both blinded and hardened him.

The supper now fairly ended, Judas, who was evidently impatient to accomplish his schemes, left the company at the table, and went out. Where he went we shall see in another place.

As soon as he was gone, the Saviour predicted again his own speedy removal, and observed that he should so make his departure that they could not follow him. Peter inquired why they could not follow him; observing that in so far as danger was concerned, there was no difficulty; for he was ready, for one, to follow him wherever he went, and even lay down his life for him. Yet, notwithstanding Peter's great confidence, the Saviour who knew his heart better than he himself did, expressed his doubts. Nay, he even assured him, that instead of carrying out into action the boldness he professed, the cock would not crow twice, the next morning, before he would three times utterly deny him.

In another conversation, a little while afterwards, Peter expressed the same confidence as before, only in different words; "Lord," said he, "I am ready to go with thee both to prison and to death." Jesus assured him he was mistaken, and repeated to him the same prediction in regard to his speedy denial of him. But Peter could not believe it. He probably felt somewhat as king Hazael had done long before, who said, when his wickedness was foretold, Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great sin?

The supper and the conversation seem to have been concluded by a hymn, after which they all soon went—Judas excepted—towards Mount Olivet. It was late, however, ere they went—as some suppose, near midnight.

It was probably at the close of the supper, and while they were going to Mount Olivet, that the Saviour gave those interesting and affecting discourses which we find in the gospel according to John, and which, for affectionate interest and benevolent regard, it is beyond the art of man to imitate. The whole was concluded by a remarkable prayer.

By this time they were arrived at the brook Kidron, in the valley east of the city. But whither were they going? The evening was somewhat advanced, and would they go, thus late, to Bethany? There was no special objection, so far as I know, to their going there at this hour, had they chosen to do so. But this was not their object. The Saviour was going to the garden of Gethsemane,* a little beyond the valley, at the foot of Mount Olivet; and the eleven apostles—Judas now being on

* This pleasant little garden—apparently a chosen retreat of our Saviour—contained, it is thought, about three-fourths of an acre of ground; and besides shrubbery had in it many olive trees.

another errand—were following him; perhaps without knowing or presuming to ask what his object was.

As they were walking along, and before they had reached the garden, the Saviour foretold how they would that very night be "offended" on account of him, and would desert him; and alluded again to his crucifixion. "But," added he, "after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

Here again Peter, with his usual self-confidence, repeated his strong assertions of loyalty to his Master; saying, that though all the rest of the company should be offended on account of him, yet he should not. It was on this occasion that Jesus, for the third time, repeated his prediction of Peter's denial of him, and that Peter as strongly as ever—and more so—affirmed he would sooner die than be guilty of such conduct. The rest of the apostles also assured their Master, with almost as much confidence as Peter did, of their entire loyalty, firm adherence and faithful affection.

They arrive, at length, at the garden, and enter it; but no sooner had they entered it, than the Saviour separated the company into

two parties; the one of four persons, the other of eight. The latter were requested to stay near the entrance of the garden, where they then were; but the other—who were Peter, James, John and himself—went farther. Perhaps you will remember that these three apostles were the very men who had been selected on a former occasion, to be witnesses, on the mount, of his remarkable transfiguration.

As he proceeded with them to a more remote part of the garden, he began to show symptoms of great sorrow, and even of the keenest anguish. He said to his disciples, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death;" bidding them at the same time, to continue where they were and watch. Pray for yourselves, moreover, he added, that ye enter not into temptation.

For himself he proceeded a little farther still, and then placed himself on his face in the usual Eastern attitude of devotion. How long he remained in this posture, we are not told. We are only informed that while there, he uttered among others, the following short but remarkable prayer; "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this

cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt."

When the prayer was ended, he rose from the place where he was, and returned to the three apostles, who, notwithstanding his strict command that they should watch with him, were fast asleep. "Simon," said he, addressing himself, as he was apt to do, to Peter—perhaps because he was always among the most forward of them to promise well, and indeed for the most part to perform well, also —"Simon, sleepest thou? What! could ye not watch with me one hour?"

And was it not strange that when they saw his agony, they could not keep awake longer? Surely but little time had elapsed after his departure, ere he found them in this condition. It could not have been an hour, or any thing like it.

The Saviour put them to a further trial. About to leave them again, in the same manner, he repeated his exhortations to them to watch and pray against that temptation, which, whether they understood it or not, was speedily coming on them.

When he had once more sufficiently cautioned them against sleeping, he went away

and prayed in the same manner as before; but again, though only absent a short time, he found them on his return as sound asleep as ever.

There is an exhausted condition of the human frame in which it is next to impossible to refrain from sleep, even when the will is most resolute to refrain from it. Sorrow, instead of diminishing this tendency, sometimes increases it. Such, we may reasonably suppose, was the condition of Peter and James and John, in the present instance.

Having roused them once more, he retired for prayer, in the former manner, and with nearly if not exactly the same form of words. When he came to pronounce the last part of his prayer, viz., "nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done," "there appeared to him," so says the Evangelist Luke, "an angel from heaven strengthening him," as well as encouraging and animating him to endure the struggle.

Yet, notwithstanding all this assistance from on high, his agony, while he prayed, was exceedingly great. So intense was it, that the perspiration of his body stood upon his skin in great drops, like drops of blood—and some

even suppose from the record of the Evangelist, that he actually perspired blood itself. Be this as it may have been, we have every evidence that his agony was excessive, beyond human conception, and almost beyond endurance.

He rose from prayer at length the third time; and again, the third time, repaired to the place where he had left his three disciples. Finding them still fast locked in the arms of sleep, he did not at first attempt to rouse them, but said; "Sleep on now, and take your rest; the hour is come; and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Recalling himself, as it were, however, he said to them, "Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." And so it proved, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

Gethsemane—Judas and his band arrive there—Jesus betrayed and seized—The apostles propose resistance—The Saviour refuses—Peter's resistance—Rebuke of Jesus—He is bound and taken to Jerusalem—Brought before Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrim—The apostles, except John, make their escape—Jesus is tried—They pretend to convict him of blasphemy—He is delivered to Pilate—End of Judas—Jesus sent to Herod—Returned to Pilate—Pilate scourges him—Gives him over to the soldiers—Pilate's wife's dream—Examination of the Saviour—Pilate wishes to liberate him—Finally gives him up, but protests his own innocence.

I have already said that the garden of Gethsemane was a chosen retreat of our Saviour and his apostles. This, Judas well knew; but whether he knew with certainty, that Jesus was there at this time, I cannot say. Perhaps it was his intention to pursue him, if necessary, as far as the house of Lazarus at Bethany; thinking it best, however, to call at places on the road which Jesus was accustomed to frequent, and among the rest at the garden of Gethsemane.

In any event he came there; and his arrival in the garden was at the very moment when the Saviour came, the third and last

time, to his three sleeping apostles. But Judas came not alone. He had with him a band of officers and soldiers sent from the chief priests; and though it was full moon at this season, and, of course, not remarkably dark, yet to make sure of finding him, they were well fitted out with lamps and torches; and to be certain of securing him, should there be any resistance from him or his companions, they were furnished with weapons.

It was while the Saviour was in the very act of speaking to his three companions, that his assailants arrived. It seems that Judas had given them, for signal, a kiss, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he whom you seek; hold him fast.

Suffer me to introduce here, by way of comment on Judas the betrayer of the Saviour, the following beautiful extract from Abbott's Corner Stone:

"The wretched man went at midnight to the place of rendezvous; and while he and the soldiers who were to accompany him, were receiving their directions, and forming their plans in the city, the Saviour was bending under the burden of those intolerable but mysterious sufferings which have thrown an

eternal gloom over the garden of Gethsemane. Upon what a scene the moon, which was always full at the time of the Jewish passover, must have looked down, at this sad hour!

"It is midnight; the moon is high, and the streets of Jerusalem are deserted and still, except when the footsteps of some solitary passenger re-echo a moment upon the ear, and then die away. Beyond the walls, even deeper silence and solitude reign; every bird is at its rest, and in the still night air we can hear the brook murmuring through the valley. In the garden, on the other side, too, the consecrated place of prayer, every zephyr is hushed, every leaf is in repose, and the moon is silvering, with its cold light, the outlines of the foliage, and brightening on the distant hills.

"It was midnight—the hour of stillness and rest—but yet the whole scene was not one of repose. The scattered disciples of Jesus waited for their Master, who was bending down in his lonely retreat, under the weight of suffering which we can neither appreciate nor comprehend. And in some lurking-place in the silent city, the rough soldiers were lighting their lanterns, and girding on

their weapons, and forming their plans. Presently they issue forth, and pass on from street to street, now in light, and now in shadow, stealing along probably in careful silence, lest they might arouse some of the people and provoke the interference which their masters dreaded. At this moment, what a spectacle must the whole scene have presented to any one who could have looked down upon the whole. The dark betrayer, walking in advance of his band with cautious steps, half fearing, and half rejoicing in his anticipated success—the careless soldiers following, to execute a work which they probably did not distinguish from any other similar deed which they often performed—the disciples, scattered through the valley, and in the garden, some probably anxious and unhappy, and others sunk in sleep—Jesus Christ struggling in solitude, under the pressure of sufferings which overwhelmed him with indescribable agitation, and almost unnerved his soul. There must have been something uncommon in an anguish, which could carry the Saviour's fortitude to its utmost limit. On the cross he was calm."

When Judas and his company of officers

approached the Saviour, the traitor, with the most consummate impudence and treachery, came forward and kissed him, calling him at the same time, in his usual friendly but affected way, Master! Of what is the human heart composed!

Jesus asked him several questions. "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" &c. Addressing himself, moreover, to the whole company who assailed him, he said unto them, "Whom seek ye?" To the questions put to the perfidious Judas, no answer was given. To the question, "Whom seek ye?" they replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said unto them, "I am he."

No sooner, however, had he said this than they drew back from him and fell to the ground as quickly as if it had been the effects of lightning. But soon recovering again, they renewed their efforts and approached him once more, when once more he repeated the inquiry, "Whom seek ye?" The answer was still the same; "Jesus of Nazareth," "I have told you," said the Saviour, "that I am he; if, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way," alluding no doubt to his companions, the apostles.

It is not likely that they cared to seize the apostles. Their great object was to secure our Saviour; and to do it in such a manner that the multitude of the common people—the rabble, as no doubt they were called at that time—would not be excited. I have already told you that mobs were common in those days as they are now; and that rulers and other great men were as cautious about stirring them up, as they now are.

The Saviour, in short, was taken. This roused the apostles. It was an event which, notwithstanding so many warnings, they seem not to have expected; and supposing, perhaps, that Jesus would, by his miraculous power, make up in strength what they wanted in numbers, proposed resistance. "Lord," they said, "shall we smite with the sword?" But this Jesus would not permit.

Is it surprising to any of my readers how these individuals came to carry swords? Apostles of the Prince of peace as they were; disciples of one who never used any other sword but the sword of the Spirit, why should they go about armed; and, above all, why should the Saviour permit such a thing?

The Saviour took men, no doubt, as he

found them. I mean to say that he did so in some good measure. Finding his apostles in the habit of wearing a particular dress, and also of carrying a particular kind of weapon for defence, he did not at once make *a war of offence* on that particular habit. He sought, rather, to establish principles, which should lead, ultimately, to the removal of this and of every other improper or unchristian practice.

The apostles, however, excited and perhaps enraged—for they were unquestionably men of like passions with ourselves, especially Peter—did not wait for an answer. Peter's sword was already drawn from its scabbard, and his strong muscular arm had already levelled a blow with it. The blow fell upon Malchus, a servant in the family of Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, and cut off his right ear.

The Saviour seeing to what an extent things were going, now interfered. He not only put a stop to all resistance, but ordered their swords to be sheathed at once; and, in addition, he healed miraculously the wound which had been already made; assuring them that, as a general fact, they who are most ready to take up arms against their fellow-men are among the first to fall by them.

He then turned to Peter, whom we may suppose to be somewhat amazed at this declaration, on the part of our Saviour, of the doctrine of non-resistance; and addressed him thus; "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions* of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

I have no doubt that Peter and the rest of the apostles were satisfied with this statement and these questions of our Saviour; and that they submitted, with comparative cheerfulness, to what seemed to be the will of high Heaven.

The reader will indulge me in one more extract from Abbott's Corner Stone:

"It seems to me that the history of the world cannot exhibit an act of higher, nobler courage, than our Saviour performed, in coming down to meet Judas and the armed band, the night before he was crucified. Just im-

* A legion of Roman soldiers consisted of various numbers at different times; but at the time of our Saviour is supposed to have consisted of six thousand men. Twelve legions of angels would therefore have been 72,000.

agine the scene. On the eastern side of Jerusalem, without the walls, there is a sudden descent to a stream, which flows through the valley. Across this stream, on the rising ground beyond, was a quiet and solitary place, where Jesus very often went for retirement and prayer. He understood, very well, his approaching torture and crucifixion; he had taken the evening before his last sad farewell of his disciples, and with the day of agony and death before him, he could not sleep. It was a cold night, but a sheltered dwelling in the city was no place for him. He asked his three dearest friends to go with him that he might once more cross the valley, and for the last time take his midnight walk upon the Mount of Olives. Oppressed with anxiety and sorrow, he fell down alone before God and prayed, that he might be spared what was to come. He had gone on firmly thus far, but now his heart almost failed him. Six long hours of indescribable agony seemed too much for the frail human powers which must necessarily bear the whole. He prayed God to spare him, if it *could be* possible.

"But it could not. His strength failed under the exhaustion produced by his mental

sufferings, and by the more than death-like perspiration, which the night air, so cold at this season that even the hardy soldiers needed fire, could not chill. Mysterious help from heaven restored him a little, but though refreshed by heavenly sympathy, we must remember that it was human powers that had this trial to bear.

"At last there is heard through the trees, at a distance down the valley, the sound of approaching voices. Lights are seen too; and now and then a glittering weapon. They are coming for him. Fly! innocent sufferer, fly! Turn to the dark solitudes behind you, and fly for your life! No. The struggle is over. The Saviour, collected and composed, rises and walks on to meet the very swords and spears sent out against him! We must remember that there was no one to encourage him, nobody to defend him, or to share his fate. It was in the darkness and stillness of night, the very hour of fear and dread; and the approach of those whose dim forms and suppressed voices arrested his attention, was the signal not of danger but of death—nor of death merely, but of protracted and unutterable torture. Still he arose and went forth to

meet them. 'Whom seek ye?' said he,—'I am he.' We have read this story so often, that it has lost its impression upon us; but could we come to it afresh, and really appreciate the gloomy, dreadful circumstances of the scene, we should feel that the deserted Saviour, in coming down under these circumstances, to meet the torches and the weapons, which were to light and guard him back to such enemies and to such a death, exhibits the loftiest example of fortitude which the world has ever seen. There was less noise, less parade, less display, than at Thermopylæ or Trafalgar; but for real sublimity of courage, the spectacle of this solitary and defenceless sufferer, coming at midnight to meet his betrayer and his band, beams with a moral splendor which never shone on earth before, and will probably never shine again."

But Jesus was bound as a criminal, and conveyed from Gethsemane to Jerusalem. As they went along, he expressed his surprise that instead of taking him when he was, as it were, completely in their power, they should come out against him in the night, as against a thief, armed with swords and staves. But this, he added, must be so, in order that the Scriptures may be fulfilled.

Notwithstanding the condition which the Saviour insisted on, when he surrendered to the officers, viz., that his companions should be permitted to retire unmolested, it appears from the Scripture narrative that they did not leave him immediately. Perhaps they followed him well nigh to the gates of Jerusalem; though this is only conjecture. Be it, however, as it may, they finally forsook him; the bold and courageous Peter among the rest.

The Saviour was taken first to the house of Annas, the father of the high priest Caiaphas, who without unloosing him, sent him to Caiaphas. Here were assembled the Jewish Sanhedrim, consisting, as I might have told you before, of seventy-two of the great men of their nation, into whose presence the Saviour was introduced.

It should not be forgotten, that it was now late in the evening—probably midnight or later, as I have already said—an hour when the Sanhedrim ought not to have been holding a session. Did they not know what was going on? Was it not a part of their general plan to have the trial in the night, lest, if it were done at any other hour, the public sympathies might be enlisted in the Saviour's favor? Is

not the night, usually, the season for vice and crime?

It has been said that the apostles forsook him and fled, before he entered Jerusalem. One of them, however, as it appears from the Scripture narrative, soon relented and returned, and not only returned, but followed the Saviour into the court house or palace where he was to be tried, and sat there with him, during the trial.

Now who should this bold disciple be? Was it Peter, who had been so ready, as he said, to die with his Master, rather than deny or desert him, and who had even drawn his sword in his defence? Far from it. It was a man of very different character. It was the mild, lovely John; the most timid, as we should naturally judge—that is, constitutionally so—of the whole number of the apostles.

Peter, however, could not forget Jesus, although he had not so much boldness, in the hour of trial, as his companion John. He followed; but it was at a distance. The trial was in the palace of the high priest. Peter did not venture to come nearer than the door. He did not dare to enter, at least at first. At that hour of the night, even as late in the

season as it now was, the air of Palestine is sometimes quite chilly, and Peter seems to have shivered with the cold. John, discovering him, brought him into the hall where the servants were; who had a fire, and he sat there for some time.

Meanwhile the Saviour was undergoing an examination before Caiaphas. The examination was short but direct; and the answers of the Saviour equally so. In one instance, his plainness was construed by the excited officers into disrespect, and he received a blow with the hand.

Attempts were made to induce men to swear falsely against him; but for a time without success. It is true, indeed, that men were not wanting to testify; but their testimony did not agree.

At last they pretended to convict him of blasphemy; not indeed by witnesses, but by his own confession. Hereafter, the Saviour had told them, they should see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. This, Caiaphas said, was blasphemy; and on inquiring of the Sanhedrim what they thought about it, they decided at once that it was truly so, and that he was guilty of death.

And now it was, that they began to treat him with every species of rudeness and insult. They spit in his face; they buffeted him, and some of them mocked him. Among other things which were done, they blindfolded him, and after having done so, they struck him on the face; and, as if to make light of his claims as a prophet, as well as to gratify their own spirit of revenge, they bade him prophesy who it was that struck him. No species of abuse, so far at least as language was concerned, was too bad to heap upon him. The servants, even, were permitted to come into the palace, and to strike him with the palms of their hands.

I have told you that John, the beloved apostle, was with Jesus all this while. How must his tender heart have been pained at the indignities which were offered to his Master! Peter, too, knew what was going on, though he strove to remain in concealment. Where the other apostles were, at this time, is not known. One might naturally conclude, had it not been for the experiment in the garden of Gethsemane, that they did not sleep much during the night.

Peter, as I have said, strove to be con-

cealed, but concealment was difficult, not to say impossible. While the trial of his Master was going on, and he was sitting among the servants at the fire in the hall, a female servant who kept the door, discovered him to be a Galilean, and as not only Jesus himself but many of his followers were known to be natives of Galilee, she suspected him at once to be one of that particular company, and made known her suspicions. But Peter denied it, and said he was not even acquainted with Jesus. At this moment the cock crew; but Peter, excited and fearful as he was, does not appear to have noticed it.

The maid was by no means satisfied with Peter's reply, and insisted that he was certainly one of Jesus's companions. Some of the servants, therefore, mentioned to Peter their suspicions; but he denied the truth with the same boldness as before. Again, the third time, the charge was made, and one of them asked Peter, if he did not actually see him in the garden of Gethsemane, at the time when Jesus was apprehended. Peter grew angry at this, and entirely forgetting himself, he recurred for a moment, to those habits which he had probably acquired while a fish-

erman—the habit of fishermen and of the country in general—and began to curse and to swear, and to say,the third time, that he knew nothing at all about Jesus.

The last or third denial was hardly out of his mouth, before the cock crew the second time—for the night was already far advanced, and morning was now evidently fast approaching. Jesus who seems to have been, at the moment the cock crew, in view of Peter, cast his eye upon him. This, for Peter, was enough. He remembered his Master's prediction that before the cock should crow twice, he would thrice deny him. He remembered it, I say, and his heart at once relented. "He went out, and wept bitterly."

But to return to our Saviour. The morning was fast approaching. The Sanhedrim, having gone by themselves, consulted together, in what way they should proceed with Jesus. I have already told you that they had pronounced him guilty, but as their nation was at this time a conquered nation, and held in subjection to the Roman government, they could not execute a criminal without a warrant from the governor.

The acting governor of Judea, at this time,

was Pontius Pilate. To him, therefore, the Saviour was soon brought, and delivered up as a state criminal. Pilate asked them what he had done. They answered that if he had not been a malefactor—a notorious one—they should not surely have troubled him with him. Pilate, who, living in Jerusalem as he did, must have known more of the matter and of their prejudices than his language to the world would seem to imply, and probably quite willing, to say the least, to get rid of so troublesome a case, told them to take him back again, and judge him in their own way, and according to their own law.

They then told him—what indeed he must have known full well before—that it was not lawful for them as Jews to put any individual to death, whatever his crime might be, without his concurrence; and as they had found the prisoner guilty in the Sanhedrim, all that they wanted now was his sentence.

Pilate inquired again, of what crime Jesus had been found guilty. Reluctant, as it seems, to tell him it was blasphemy, they told him it was sedition or treason. He had been found perverting the nation, they said; forbidding people to give tribute to Cæsar; and

saying that he himself was a king. To this, however, they added the crime of blasphemy and probably many others.

The Saviour, during the whole time, remained silent. Pilate at length inquired of him if he had nothing to say, but he did not choose to reply. Pilate was somewhat surprised at his continued silence; and, as the Scriptures assure us, he marvelled.

Perhaps I ought to tell you in one word, what became of the traitor Judas. When he found that the chief priests had condemned the Saviour, his heart relented. Perhaps he thought, at first, that Jesus would rescue himself by a miracle, but he saw now it was otherwise. He returned the money to the chief priests, and told them his fault; and when they refused to take it back again, or pay any attention to his confessions, he left it in the temple and "went and hanged himself; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."*

Pilate not quite satisfied with the silence of the Saviour, called him again before him,

* I have quoted this, as if it stood thus in the Bible; because I conceive this is the natural connection, although part of it is found, not in the Evangelists, but in the Acts.

and inquired whether the charge, that he set himself up as a king, was or was not just. After much conversation and explanation, on the part of the Saviour, and many curious questions on the part of Pilate, the latter sent him to Herod the king, for further examination.

Here, too, as before, he was closely questioned, and with the same results—he was silent. His silence, however, was not borne by Herod as well as it had been by Pilate. The latter had some sentiments of respect for him, but Herod appeared to despise him; and with his men of war, or as I suppose is meant his life guard, he mocked and derided him, and having "arrayed him in a gorgeous robe," he returned him to Pilate.

Pilate now calls the chief priests and rulers of the Jews together—those individuals who had been most forward in accusing the Saviour—and told them, that notwithstanding all their charges against him, neither he nor Herod had been able to find any fault in him. He proposed, therefore, merely to chastise him, and then set him free.

It appears that it was customary with Pilate, the Roman governor, to release to the Jews,

at their feast of Passover, every year, one criminal. How such a strange custom came to prevail is hard to conceive; but so it was. The people usually agreed on some individual, and the individual on whom they were agreed, whatever might have been his crime, was liberated.

At the time our Saviour was arraigned before Pilate, there was in the custody of the latter a noted prisoner whose name was Barabbas. This man, in company with some other ruffians who now lay bound in the same prison with him, had been guilty both of making an insurrection in the city and of committing murder.

When, therefore, the people became clamorous, as usual on these occasions, to have one of the prisoners given up to them, Pilate inquired if it should not be Jesus. At first he had hoped that this would be the result, well knowing, as he did, that it was the envy and ill-will of the chief priests and other ringleaders of the people, that brought him there.

But these wicked men had now at length so effectually won over the mass of the people to their views and induced them to conform

to their desires, that it had become the general wish to destroy the Saviour and preserve Barabbas. Pilate reminded them that the matter lay in their own hands; that they could save the life of just which individual of the two they desired. But having fixed their minds, according to the prompting of the chief priests and rulers, there was no turning them. The universal cry was; We will not have Jesus, but Barabbas.

Pilate inquired, what then should be done with Jesus. The answer was, Let him be crucified. Now to *crucify* was to fasten the criminal on a large cross, erected for the purpose, by means of cords, &c., &c., and to suffer him to remain there in an unnatural and painful posture till he died.* It was a Roman method of punishment and not a Jewish one; though it was sometimes practised both by the Jews and other nations.

Pilate, still reluctant to consent to the crucifixion of the Saviour, inquired again whether it would not be well for him to liber-

* I have represented the criminal as having been usually fastened to the cross by means of cords. Of this, however, I am not quite certain. We know a different method was pursued in the case of our Saviour, as we shall see in its appropriate place.

ate Jesus, and crucify Barabbas. But there is no moving a mob—because it is a body of men which, *as a body merely*, acts without reason,—and notwithstanding all his entreaties, the cry was still against Jesus, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

Pilate now took the Saviour and scourged him. Is it here asked why he should torture him before his crucifixion, especially if he was rather inclined to be merciful to him? Perhaps he thought that a moderate scourging would in some measure satisfy the general cry for vengeance, and abate the public rage; and that the mob might in this way yet be induced to spare him. This, however, is not very probable. There is another reason which is more so. It was the Roman custom to scourge prisoners just before they were to be put to death; and Pilate probably gave orders to scourge Jesus, as a mere matter of course, or custom.

The soldiers of the governor, considering themselves as now fully licensed to treat Jesus with every indignity they pleased, took him into the Prætorium, or common hall, and having collected the whole band to which they belonged, they began, forthwith to insult and

torment him, in various ways. They first stripped him of the gorgeous robe which Herod had put on; and in place of it put on a robe of purple, with a scarlet one over it, that he might appear somewhat in the dress of a prince; and as if to ridicule him for pretending to be the king of the Jews. They next prepared a crown of thorns, and put that on his head; and for a sceptre they put in his right hand a reed or cane.

Having thus arrayed him, they began to salute him as if he were a king, kneeling and pretending to reverence him as they would a young prince or king whom they had just crowned. Not satisfied with this, they proceeded to other measures; one and another crying out—Hail, king of the Jews! At the same time advancing towards him as if to offer him some present or to kiss his hands or feet, they struck him in the face.

What a scene was this! The Lord of heaven and earth—the King of kings—the Being by whom all worlds and all their inhabitants were made—the Being who with a word could have crushed legions of soldiers beneath his feet, in an instant—submitting without a word or look of resistance to such

indignities as these! Who can bear to think of it without shuddering! without wondering, too, and admiring!

And yet all this meant something! The Saviour did not tread this thorny path and drink this bitter cup of the wrath of God, at the hands of guilty men, for nothing. Far enough from that. There is a deep meaning to all these sufferings, which the meek and blessed Jesus endured; and that meaning is for you, reader, and for me—for every one that has an immortal spirit.

But the Saviour's cup of suffering was not yet full. There were trials of the severest kind still in reserve. The soldiers seemed to vie with each other, who should be the most abusive. Some of them went so far, even, as to spit on him; while others, snatching the reed out of his hand, smote him with it on the head. This last indignity was the more painful to be endured, as every blow would probably thrust the sharp thorns, deeper into his temples.

A curious circumstance now occurred. The wife of the governor just at this time, sent a message to her husband about a dream she had just had. We are not, indeed,

informed what the dream was; but only the conclusion to which her own mind was led, as the consequence. This was that it was unsafe for her husband to have any thing to do in the condemnation of so just a man as Jesus was.

Whether the dream and message had any effect on the mind of Pilate, is not known. To me, however, it seems quite probable that it had. The people of those times appear to have paid more attention to their dreams than they ought to have done, and more perhaps, than we do, in modern times.

Our reason for believing that Pilate's fears and superstitions were roused by his wife's message, is the fact that he declared again to the Jews, immediately afterward, that he must still consider Jesus as an innocent man; at the same time bringing him out escorted by a band of soldiers and bidding them to behold him.

Such a sight, instead of moving them to pity or causing their hearts to relent in the least degree, only served to render them so much the more infuriated; and they cried out with more violence than ever, Crucify him! Crucify him! To this Pilate only repeated his

former statement, that for his part he deemed him an innocent man; and that if they were determined on his destruction, they might indeed have him crucified; though if he should yield his assent, they must still take upon themselves the responsibility, and bear the blame.

The Jews spoke of his blasphemy, as they called it. He had publicly declared himself to be the Son of God, they said; and this with them was a capital crime. Such conduct they thought was quite enough to condemn him to the cross, had he been guilty of nothing else.

This last information—that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God—frightened Pilate excessively, and, taken in connection with the dream which has been mentioned, inclined him more than ever to try to release Jesus, although he well knew that to reverse his sentence would at least be a very unpopular measure for himself.

In this state of mental confusion and reproach of conscience, he went to Jesus, and taking him aside asked him with more earnestness than he had even done before, of his origin. Jesus, however, knowing that his

innocency was already sufficiently manifest, refused to make him any reply.

Pilate was dissatisfied with his silence, and reminded the Saviour of the fact, that he held in his hands the power of life and death to persons in his circumstances, and that if he pleased he could yet release him. This called forth an answer; "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

From this time forth, Pilate was more disposed than ever to release Jesus. But the Jews, too, were more resolutely than ever bent on his destruction; and when they found how anxious Pilate was to recall his sentence and set him free, they actually began to predict evil to Pilate himself, not indeed the loss of liberty or life, but loss of influence, if not indeed of his office. For as the emperor Tiberius Cæsar had numerous spies in his provinces, who would be likely to report every thing done by the governor which looked at all like interference with his laws or his authority, Pilate knew how cautious he must be; and it was only necessary for the Jews to remind him, that if he let Jesus go he was unfriendly to Cæsar, to stir up in him not

only a due regard to his own safety, but that undue regard to popularity, which, to most men in office, leads to the commission of much error.*

Pilate at length brought Jesus out and sat down on his judgment-seat in a place called the Pavement. On taking his seat he said to the Jews, "Behold your king!"

It was now about nine o'clock in the morning. The Jews were as clamorous as ever to have Jesus delivered up to them to be crucified. Pilate, still reluctant, said, Shall I crucify your king? We have no king but Cæsar,† they answered.

The popular clamor became now so great that Pilate resolved to resist it no longer. So taking some water, and washing his hands,

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* Since the above was written, I have seen an article going the round of the newspapers, purporting to be the trial of the Saviour before Pilate the Roman governor of Judea. It is most unquestionably a fabrication; but the remarks of Mr. Noah, a learned Jew in New York, in regard to Pilate, found in some of the papers in connection with it, correspond almost exactly with those above.

† What is meant, then, some will say, when it is said that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod? Was not Herod a king? Yes; he was the king or tetrarch of the province of Galilee, but he had no power in the province of Judea, of which Jerusalem was the capital. Herod, it would seem, however, must have been at Jerusalem during the feast; for Jesus could not have been sent into Galilee—I mean there was not time for it.

he deliberately observed to the murderous multitude, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." The multitude answered, as with one voice, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

CHAPTER XXII.

Jesus in the hands of his murderers—Their indignities—The cross—Jesus led to it—Bears a portion of it—Relieved by Simon the Cyrenian—The Saviour at the cross—Intoxicating drink offered to him—Nine o'clock in the morning—He is nailed to the cross—The malefactors with him—His sufferings—His raiment—The title over him—Further abuses and insults—The penitent malefactor—The mother of Jesus—Slow hours—Jesus's cries—He thirsts, and is offered vinegar—Twelve o'clock—The darkness—The earthquake, and its effects—The females who remained at the cross—Disposition of the Saviour's body—Joseph's tomb offered—The body is wrapped and laid in it—The tomb closed—The Sanhedrim place a guard over it.

Jesus was now delivered up to his infuriated murderers. They first mocked him as long as they pleased, then they stripped him of his purple robe, and having put his own raiment on him, they led him away, accompanied by two malefactors, to be crucified.

The place they had fixed upon, for his crucifixion, was called Calvary, or Mount Cal-

vary, or sometimes Golgotha, *i. e.*, the place of a skull. It was a little beyond the city walls, to the north-west. Though sometimes called a mount, or mountain, it was a mere hill.

It was customary for those who were sentenced to be executed on a cross to carry the cross, with them, to the place of crucifixion; not indeed the whole of it, but only, the upper or *transverse* portion. The cross, as perhaps most readers know, consisted chiefly of two pieces, an upright part or post and a cross-piece. Both, united, bore some resemblance to the letter T. Only the middle portion extended a little higher than the cross-piece.

The Saviour, as it seems, found it difficult to carry so heavy a piece of timber; faint as he was from the blows and fatigue to which he had been subjected all night and all the morning; and after proceeding a little way, a substitute was provided. This was one Simon, of Cyrene, in Africa. He was, of course, a dark colored man; and was, perhaps, selected on account of his being very strong, as almost all the native Africans now are, and probably were in ancient times.

Among the multitude of spectators that followed our Saviour to witness his crucifixion,

were quite a number of women.* These females, several of whom had been his followers, were deeply affected by his sad fate, and gave vent to their feelings in wailings and lamentations. But he who never beheld sorrow with a heart unmoved, fatigued and exhausted as he was, and ready to sink, so far as his human nature merely was concerned, addressed himself to them as he passed along, and thus endeavored to comfort them; "Daughters of Jerusalem," he said, "weep not for me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children."

He then proceeded to foretell the miseries which were ultimately—nor that very remotely either—to fall on the Jewish nation. These miseries were to be so great as to render life, to many of them, a burden. Such was to be the distress from famine, pestilence, and the sword combined, that those individuals would be almost envied who had no children or

* It is worthy of observation in this place, that our Saviour in his remarks to these females, does not once hint at that idle—I may say wicked—curiosity which often draws people of both sexes together at public executions. May we not reasonably hope that among the crowd of females present, of whom mention is here made, there were no such characters? May we not hope that infuriated as the mob was, the female heart universally was moved to sympathy?

friends about whom it was needful for them to be concerned or anxious.

It is hardly necessary to repeat to those who have read history—especially the Jewish history by Josephus—that all the evils which our Saviour foretold were completely fulfilled, about thirty or forty years after his crucifixion; Jerusalem being so entirely destroyed, that not one stone of its temple or walls, was left upon another.

But our Saviour, with his cross-bearer and his murderers have now reached Calvary—the place of execution. There is the fatal spot. The hole is dug for the main post or support of the cross. Here is Simon, the Cyrenian, panting to be set free from his cumbrous load. Here is the Saviour ready to be fastened to the accursed wood. Pale though he is, yet is he firm. Not a nerve, so far as we know, is agitated; not a muscle quivers. The crowd, around, are in busy motion; but are kept in order by the Roman soldiers who attend.

Where are the apostles? Where is Peter, especially? No trace of them can be found, save the affectionate John. He, as ever, remains near. Here, too, among other fe-

male friends, is his aged mother. Is not her cup of affliction now full? Is not her heart ready, literally, to burst with anguish? Or is her mind so enlightened in regard to the character of her son, and her faith so strong, that even under the infirmities of age the worst condition of a dear child cannot move her? Or, once more still, does she indulge the secret hope, after all, that with a power not unlike that which he once exercised at Nazareth's hill top, he will pass away from the crowd, and by timely flight to some other province or country, carry on a little longer the business of his mission?

But his mission is now at a close, or nearly so. His time of departure is near at hand. He has already been led as a sheep to the slaughter, and he is now about to be sacrificed. Nothing can save him. The tears and entreaties of friends, are of course, without effect. The malice and fury of enemies must be gratified: but more than this, the will of his Father—the purpose of his mission—must be accomplished.

It was customary, in those days,—so we are informed,—to give dying criminals a dose of strong wine, mingled with spices of some

sort, to make them less sensible to their suffering. Indeed, a practice not unlike this is sometimes adopted in our own days. In the present instance, however, instead of affording him that mitigation of his sufferings which a little cordial was supposed to produce, the unfeeling wretches only seemed desirous to add to his woes by giving him a mixture of vinegar and gall,—not only extremely bitter, but in the highest degree nauseous. He refused, however, to do more than just to taste of it.

It seems that he was determined not only to avoid drinking any bitter or nauseous drugs, but the use of any thing at all. His friends who were present offering him wine, with spices, he refused even to taste it. He was resolved, as I doubt not, to have his head clear and his body and mind both in a natural state to the last. Is it not strange that any dying *Christian* or *penitent* criminal can feel otherwise? Is it not strange that any such person should diminish his sensibility in the last moments of life by that which will intoxicate or benumb? When the last rays of this world's light are shining upon us, is it not strange that we should darken every window,

and close up every avenue to the soul, as if to hasten ourselves into utter darkness?

It was now fully nine o'clock, which, with the Jews, was the third hour of the day. Not a moment was to be lost. The Saviour was fastened to the bloody cross, and lifted up into the usual position; his arms fastened to the cross-piece, and his feet and body attached to the main post or pillar. There hangs the Son of God, bleeding, suffering, and, in the end, dying, not only for his very murderers, but for the world!

It has been said, in another place, that the more usual method of attaching the feet and hands to the cross was by means of cords. It was only to those who were regarded as the worst of malefactors that further indignities were offered.

It was the lot of our Saviour to be thus regarded—that is, to be regarded and treated as the vilest of malefactors; and it was probably this which led to a departure from the usual mode of attaching the limbs to the cross. Instead of being fastened by cords, his hands and feet were nailed! A cruel process, indeed; but yet he must endure it! Who does not know that the hands and feet abound with

very sensible parts—nerves, blood-vessels, tendons, &c.—and that to suffer them to be pierced with huge nails or spikes, is to undergo a most exceedingly painful operation?

On each side of our Saviour were other crosses, erected at the same time; and each had its victim, who were robbers, or, as the sacred narrative expresses it, thieves. Was it not enough that the Saviour must die in a manner so ignominious, but must he die in such company?

There is no evidence, however,—nor is there any reason for suspicion on the subject —that the Saviour made the least resistance in word or deed, to what was going on. Though the nails pierced a thousand nerves, and other tender parts of those exquisitely sensible members, the hands and feet; though the limbs were stretched out, and his body suspended in a way which could not but be exceedingly distressing at the beginning, and in the end almost intolerable, not a word of reproach escaped him. Ay more, much more than all this can be said. He not only did not complain of any individual, he interceded for every one, and above all, for his murder-

ers. "Father, forgive them," he said; "for they know not what they do."

I am sometimes led to think that we attach too much importance, comparatively, to the mere bodily sufferings of our Saviour, in his last hours, and too little to the sufferings of his mind. I have a thousand times endured that inward anguish which it was as much more painful for me to endure, than to endure the pain of torn and bleeding hands, as can well be conceived. In like manner, great as was the physical anguish of the suffering Son of God, I am in no wise sure, it is worth speaking of in comparison with the mental anguish to which he was subjected. And yet he bore the whole,—no groans, no sighing, no tears. Hour after hour of quiet endurance passed away without even—so far as we know—the large, bloodlike drops of perspiration which had been seen at Gethsemane.

My readers must pardon me, if I stop here to meditate a little on the sufferings of Christ. If he was susceptible of suffering at all—if he was, in this respect, human—and I know not who will for a moment doubt it—his mental sufferings in behalf of mankind must have

been infinitely beyond any thing of which we can at present conceive.

The Scriptures repeatedly assure us, that he knew what was in man; must he not, therefore, have known all his disease, ignorance and impiety? Must he not have seen, at a single glance, all the consequences of all the transgression, physical and moral, which ever have fallen, or ever will fall upon the human race? Yet what a sight must it have been! What merely human being, with a clear view of a thousandth part of the miseries to which our race subject themselves by their disobedience of God's laws, natural and revealed, would not sink into the very earth, under the incumbent weight?

A friend of mine—a person of no more than ordinary sensibilities, perhaps — was lately mourning over the sufferings of a young woman reduced to the borders of the grave by errors in regard to dress, exercise, &c.; and the thought of her distress, with a consciousness of his inability to relieve it, made him for a time quite miserable. The following thought struck me very forcibly. Now, said I to myself, if a single person, from sympathy with a fellow-being, suffers so much,

what must have been the sufferings of the Saviour, from sympathy with our whole race? For he knew not only the sufferings of the youthful individual with whom my friend sympathized so strongly, and knew and lamented with at least equal sincerity, the physical transgression which led to it, but he knew also all her other transgressions physical and moral, with their consequences, in time and in eternity. And not only did he see, as with a single glance, all the suffering of that individual, throughout the whole period of her existence, here and hereafter, but he also saw the sin and suffering of every individual that ever has lived or ever will live. He not only saw all this immense amount of sin and suffering, but he sympathized deeply, too, with the sufferers. And if my friend, for a few moments, was torn with anguish by sympathy with the suffering of one person, what created mind on earth—I was going to say, in heaven itself—can conceive of the amount of *his* suffering who saw and sympathized with, and in a sense bore the sorrows of thousands of millions!

I wish my readers would run through this train of thought with much attention. Minds,

I know, are not constituted—or rather, are not habituated—alike; nevertheless, I cannot help thinking that no mind, however habituated, can avoid deriving benefit from such a train of reflection. But let us now return to our subject.

The body of Jesus, according to the custom of those times, had been stripped of its clothing; and his garments fell, by the same Jewish custom, to the executioners, of whom there were four. They divided them into four parts, and to determine which should belong to each individual, they cast lots.

The vest* of the Saviour seems to have been, in its structure, a little peculiar. It had no seam, but was woven from top to bottom, in one piece. For this, as they were unwilling to divide it, they cast lots, to determine to whom of the four it should fall. The relation of these circumstances might not be very important, were it not to show how exactly was fulfilled the prophecy of David

* The vest of those times was properly a coat; and was the principal garment, except the outside covering or cloak. It was sometimes a straight garment, with openings only for the head and arms. Such was our Saviour's vest, or vesture, or coat, here alluded to.

concerning the matter, "They parted my garment among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots."

The soldiers who performed the office of executioners, appear also to have constituted a guard for the protection of the criminals, to see that they were undisturbed before their death, either by friends or foes. Having disposed of the garments, they therefore remained on the spot.

The reader must be aware, from the very nature of the case, that criminals thus extended on a cross do not die immediately. They usually live many hours,—sometimes, if they are very strong, perhaps a day or so. The wounds with the nails—where nails are used —are not inflicted on parts so essential to life as the lungs, the brain, the stomach, the heart, &c. It is a long time before the inflammation which is produced both by the nails and by the unnatural position and condition of the limbs, can so affect the whole system as to cause death. Wounds made with nails, moreover, do not bleed much, to cause faintness from the loss of blood, or at first any degree of fever.

A title or superscription having been written by Pilate, the governor, it was now placed on the cross, directly over the head of Jesus. It was the following: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." It was written in three languages, viz., Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

Some of the Jews objected to the idea suggested in the title that he was the king of the Jews, and proposed to Pilate that he should alter it so as to have it merely affirm that he *claimed* to be the king of the Jews. But Pilate refused to do this, saying, "What I have written, I have written."

But was the ground deserted by the spectators, now that their end was gained? Satisfied with what was done, did they return to their own homes? Or did they remain on the spot, still gazing, and insulting, and deriding? We are informed that the latter was the fact. Even those who passed by reviled him, nodding their heads, and saying, "Ah! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou art indeed the Son of God, come down from the cross." The chief priests, and scribes, and elders, and rulers, quite as much as the common

people, made the same remarks, or those which were similar. "If he be the King of Israel," said they, "let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him."

One of the criminals, at the side of the Saviour, also repeated the same sentiments. "If thou be the Christ," said he, in a scornful and disdainful manner, "save thyself and us." Punishment, as we see, therefore, does not always soften the heart, but sometimes has the contrary effect.

The other robber was, however, affected; and not only refrained from expressing any resentment, or uttering the least complaint, but even cautioned his companion against doing so. "Dost not thou fear God," said he, "seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" He also acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and testified to the innocence of the Saviour; and, in short, gave every external evidence of true and unfeigned repentance.

He did more than even this; he manifested the sincerity of his repentance by asking pardon for his offences at the Saviour's hands. "Lord, remember me," said he, "when thou comest into thy kingdom." He obtained a gracious answer to his request. "To-day,"

said the Saviour, "shalt thou be with me in Paradise." One person in the world who repented in the last hours of his life has been pardoned, if no more. Let no one despair, therefore; but let it be also remembered that the case before us is the only one of the kind mentioned in the whole Bible. Let no individual, presuming on God's mercy and readiness to forgive, delay to a dying hour this great work, the work of repentance.

While the Saviour was hanging on the cross and the multitude were deriding him, and heaping upon him many indignities, there were also near him some sympathizing friends. Among these were his mother and several other females, and John his beloved apostle, who, as I have elsewhere said, had never, except for a short time at Gethsemane, deserted him.

And now was witnessed such a scene, as the world has rarely if ever known; such a proof, I mean, of tender affection for an aged parent. If doubts had ever entered the mind of his aged mother whether he loved her or not, during his long and numerous seasons of absence from her, these doubts must have been removed at once, when she heard from

his dying lips the direction, "Woman, behold thy son!" meaning John; and also the equally important direction to the latter, "Behold thy mother!" No wonder the latter took her to his own home, and sustained her during life. Lovely, and living as he was—the dearest object of his heavenly Master's affection—how could he have refused the dying request? How could the mother, moreover, refuse to adopt him as her son?

The time was passing, but to those in torture, it must have gone slowly. To persons in such circumstances, an hour seems like a month, almost; and a day like a year. And of all torture, except that perhaps by a slow fire, the tortures of crucifixion, in the manner I have described, are the most excruciating.

Three hours had worn away and the sun had come to the meridian. But was its brightness undimmed when its Creator, clothed in humanity, hung on a cross? It had been so, for aught we know, till noon—the sixth hour of the Jews—but now a change took place. A darkness came on, which continued three hours, viz., from twelve to three o'clock in the afternoon.

What happened during this long darkness,

Scripture does not inform us. Did Jesus endure his agonies in silence? Or was he giving counsel and instruction to those around him, a part of the time, and especially to the penitent malefactor? In any event, we may suppose his thoughts were in active employ. It could not have been otherwise.

When the darkness had continued about three hours, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," that is to say, being interpreted, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

At the words Eloi, Eloi, some of the Jews pretended to believe he was calling for Elias, *i. e.*, Elijah, to come and relieve him; upon which they took occasion to renew their abuses and insults.

At length his system, enfeebled and enflamed, his blood as it were dried up, and his spirit almost ready to bid farewell to its suffering tenement, the Saviour complained, for once, of thirst.

It was customary at the crucifixions in those days, to place near the cross a vessel containing a species of vinegar. When the Saviour complained of thirst, some of those who stood by filled a sponge with vinegar, and

after fastening it to a stalk of hyssop, applied it to his mouth to relieve his thirst, now become extreme. Others, however, were unwilling to afford him even this poor palliation of his sufferings; but advised to let him entirely alone, and to wait and see whether Elijah would come to his relief.

But the last scene, the scene of scenes, was now approaching. The Saviour had received the vinegar, and all the prophecies respecting the manner of his death were now fulfilled. With a loud voice, therefore, he pronounced the words, "*It is finished.*"

But he had much strength of body, and of lungs, especially, yet remaining. His life, though he was greatly tortured, and humanly speaking, greatly exhausted, was not to be *taken* from him; but he was about to yield it, or lay it down. And now in a loud but distinct voice, he cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." When this was said, he bowed his head, and expired.

Were we to witness such a scene and the convulsions of nature which followed, I know not but we should think the dissolution of all things was about to take place. Let us review the particulars of this great transaction.

The sun was darkened; not by an eclipse, for it was full moon, and an eclipse of the sun cannot happen in such circumstances. It was by a miracle. It was by the mighty power of God.

There was an earthquake. Palestine, on the sea-coast, is sometimes rather subject to earthquakes; but here was an earthquake at this very instant, just as the Saviour was dismissing his spirit! No doubt, this, too, was a miracle, and a most stupendous one.

The rocks were rent in sunder. This was one effect of the earthquake. Rocks are often cleft in this manner. How far this particular earthquake extended beyond Jerusalem, is not known.

The vail of the temple, which separated between the holy and the most holy place, was also torn from top to bottom, so as to expose to view what was usually regarded by the Jews as sacred. This, too, must have been miraculous. It proves, also, if it were caused by the earthquake, how great that earthquake must have been. An earthquake which shall produce such an effect, must have been almost or quite sufficient to throw down the temple itself.

The tombs were opened, and many bodies of saints, long before deceased, were raised to life. Here again was a miracle, independent of the earthquake—a miracle of a most astonishing character too. After the resurrection of the Saviour, many of these holy persons or saints came out of the tombs and were seen about the streets of Jerusalem.

This spectacle affected the whole multitude; and now not only those who had sympathized all along with the Saviour, but probably too, some of those who had at first derided him, smote their breasts in amazement and sorrow. The guard also who attended, said, "Truly this was the Son of God." The Roman centurion who commanded the guards was moreover heard to make a similar confession; "Certainly," said he, "this was a righteous man."

I have also told you that there were some sympathizing friends near the cross. A little farther off, were many. Not only were the very women there who traveled with Jesus and his apostles in Galilee, "ministering to them of their substance," as was mentioned in its place, but also, as Luke tells us, all his acquaintance. Extended as his acquaintance

must have been, this would include quite a multitude.

Among these individuals are particularly noticed, Mary Magdalene, and Salome, and Mary the wife of Zebedee, and mother of James and John, sometimes called James the less. How much bolder these women were, than the apostles! Not one of them were present that we know of, but John, and *perhaps* the penitent Peter.

The body of Jesus still hung on the cross. But as the Sabbath—the Jewish Sabbath, which was the same as our Saturday—was now approaching, and the Jewish law did not permit malefactors to remain on a cross on the Sabbath, the executioners were required by Pilate, at the request of the Jews, to hasten the death of their criminals by breaking their legs.

They accordingly proceeded to perform what was required. They came first and broke the legs of the two robbers, after which they approached the Saviour to break his also; but finding him already dead they deemed it unnecessary. One of them, however, in a wanton, inhuman manner, pierced his side with a spear; upon which there came out of the wound a quantity of blood and water.

It was now nearly night. I have already said, bodies were not allowed to remain on the cross during the Sabbath, which began with the Jews on Friday evening. Of course the body of the Saviour must be in some way disposed of. What should be done with it, was no doubt an important question at this time with the friends of Jesus.

At this juncture, one Joseph, a wealthy gentleman of Arimathea, or Ramoth—a friend of the Saviour—came forward, and interceded with Pilate for the body. This request was granted, and the body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in cloths and spices, and laid in a new sepulchre, which Joseph happened to own in that vicinity. This sepulchre was in a garden, and was hewn in a solid rock.

I have said that the body was wrapped in cloths and accompanied by spices. This, however, was only a temporary embalming. It was merely to preserve the body in a proper condition till the Sabbath was over, after which it was intended to embalm it in the usual Jewish mode. For this temporary embalming, however costly, provision had been made, from another Jew, who was also, in all probability wealthy. I allude to Nicodemus.

More bold than he once was, when he first came to see Jesus by night, he did not scruple now to be seen at his tomb in the day time; and to bring to his interment a mixture of about a hundred weight of myrrh and aloes. These were used at his request, in wrapping the body preparatory to its interment.

When all this was done, the tomb was closed, by the application of a very large stone to its mouth. The female friends of the deceased Jesus, who had been present at the cross all day, and had seen that the body was properly deposited in the tomb, now returned to their own homes, or to those of their friends in Jerusalem; and, after making what preparation they had time to make, before the Sabbath came on, for effectually embalming the body when the Sabbath was over, they ceased from their labors, and rested, as their law required.

The next day, however, though it was the Sabbath, it occurred to the members of the Sanhedrim to do one thing which, as it would seem, they had till now forgotten. They recollected how Jesus had said that after three days he would rise again. They therefore thought among themselves that perhaps

the apostles, or some of the rest of his disciples, might steal the body out of the grave, and then say the Saviour had risen. So, after consulting with Pilate, and obtaining his permission, they sealed the stone, as they termed it, which was placed at the mouth of the tomb; and, not satisfied with this, set a considerable guard around it, to see that no person approached it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The morning of the first day of the week—The women visit the sepulchre—The earthquake and its consequences—Peter and John informed of what had happened—They run to the grave—The women there again—The two angels—Mary meets the Saviour—The other women also meet with him—Skepticism of the apostles—Story of stealing the body—The Saviour appears to Peter—To Cleopas and his companions—To the eleven at Jerusalem—To the eleven the second time—The incredulity of Thomas—Meeting with some of them, in fishing, on the sea of Galilee—Meeting at the mountain—Jesus again at Jerusalem—His instructions.

The Sabbath was now over, and the female friends of Jesus, having arisen at the earliest dawn, or much sooner, were preparing to embalm his body, as they had before contemplated. Meanwhile, some of them thought

they would go to the tomb or sepulchre, and see if all was right; but who would remove the stone for them, they thought within themselves. And, surely enough, this was a very natural question.

But the stone was already removed, notwithstanding the guards. Just before the arrival of the women, an earthquake had occurred, which not only, in all human probability, awakened the guards, if any of them were really sleeping, but excessively frightened them. It was, moreover, followed by very strange appearances. An angel of the Lord descended from the heavens, and, in the full face and defiance of the guards, rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. This shocked the guards still more, and, from the circumstances which followed, it is reasonable to believe they fled, for we hear no more of their being near the spot.

The female visitants to the tomb, therefore, found the stone removed, though the angel had disappeared. Surprised at the unexpected sight, and probably fearing the body of the Saviour was stolen or otherwise removed, they went and told Peter and John of it, who, running to the sepulchre and looking in, saw

indeed that the body was missing. The clothes, however, on looking closely, did not present that appearance of disorder which indicated robbery; and, on examining still more closely, they found every thing folded and put in order, as much so, almost, as if the place had been a bed-chamber, and the person who had slept there had but just left it. It was now, for the first time, that John saw fully the whole character of the Saviour, and can be fairly said to have believed on him, and that he was indeed alive. But where was he? Believing, yet wondering, he returned, with Peter, into the city.

But Mary Magdalene, who had been one of the first at the tomb, and had hastened to inform John and Peter, having now arrived again at the spot, looked, weeping, into the tomb, and, to her surprise, saw something more than the clothes. Two angels were there, dressed in white, sitting in the place where the dead body had so recently been, who inquired of her why she wept. "Because," said she, "they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

In the meantime, however, the Saviour was

not far off, just behind her. Hearing a noise, perhaps, she turned her head to look, and saw a person standing there; but, for some reason or other, she did not at first suspect it was the Saviour. He, too, addressed her, asking why she wept, but still she did not recognize him, but supposed him to be the gardener; for I have already told you that the tomb was in a garden. Addressing herself to him, in her haste and anxiety, she told him that if he had removed the body of her Saviour from the tomb, and would tell her where it now was, she would proceed at once to take care of it, in the usual manner, preparatory to its final burial.

But how great must have been her surprise when the Saviour, with a peculiar inflection of the voice,—one which she could not mistake,—and, in his usual familiar manner, called her by her name, and said to her, "Mary." How quickly did she turn herself fully round, and look at him in the face, and, with a joy unknown to her before,—I had almost said unknown before to any mortal in any circumstances,—once more call him, in her former familiar manner, "Master."

It seems, from the narrative, that, in a

transport of joy, she was ready to embrace him, but a most remarkable but yet tender reply prevented it. "Touch me not," said he, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

Once I wondered what the Saviour here meant, when he told Mary this. I could not think how it was that he should assign it as a reason why she must not approach him that he had not yet ascended to his Father. Here, before he had ascended, seemed to me to be the time and place for him to receive his disciples, and manifest friendship by the usual tokens of regard. But I misunderstood the passage entirely. He meant, most evidently, as much as this: "We have no time, now, Mary, for these salutations, and other tokens of affection; there will be time enough for this before I ascend to my Father. At present, you cannot do me a greater kindness than to go and announce my resurrection to my disciples." Does not this give a new and clear view to the whole passage? But, to return to the narrative.

Other persons as well as Mary had infor-

mation from heavenly messengers, in respect to the Saviour; and some of them were reminded, by these messages, of the Saviour's promise to meet them again in Galilee, when he was with them there, and was foretelling to them his death and resurrection.

Nor was this all. In the hurry and agitation of the morning, while the females were so anxiously running to and fro, and giving information of what they had seen and heard, and perhaps consulting with Peter and John about it—I mean Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome, Joanna, &c.—the Saviour appeared to them also, and addressed them familiarly, saying, "All hail!" They also paid their respects to him—which, however, he did not repel—by holding him by the feet, and as the Scripture expresses it, "worshiping him."

Perceiving the confusion of their minds from the joy mingled with surprise they felt, he endeavored to quiet them by assuring them that there was no need of fear; and, also, by bidding them to remind his brethren of the promised meeting in Galilee, and of his readiness to fulfil his promise by meeting them there.

It seems, however, that this interview, like

that with Mary, was very short, and that Jesus soon disappeared. They brought the intelligence he had requested them to carry to the eleven apostles; but they seemed at first hardly to credit it. Even Peter and John, who just now seemed to *believe*, had half relapsed into their former skepticism.

Perhaps they were not a little perplexed by a story already in circulation, with whose origin they might not have been as yet acquainted. For though they knew full well that they were not guilty of the charge it contained, they could not be quite sure that none of the rest of his disciples might not have been. I allude to a story fabricated by the Sanhedrim,* that the disciples of Jesus had stolen away his body while the guards were asleep. This was in itself a most unlikely story; how could they know what was done when they were fast asleep? Besides, it was death for a Roman soldier to be found sleeping on guard; but the Sanhedrim had promised to protect

* The guard had told the Sanhedrim about the earthquake and the removal of the stone from the mouth of the tomb; and the Sanhedrim had not only promised to screen them from harm, but actually bribed them, by means of money, to tell the story even against their own reputation as soldiers.

the soldiers, should they be brought to account for their conduct. The story, however, passed current for a while, and probably staggered, in the confused state of their minds, some of the disciples, and possibly some of the apostles themselves.

The Saviour's next appearance, was to Peter, but we are not told exactly when it was, or where. About the same time, however, he appeared to two of his disciples, in company, on the road to Emmaus, a village about seven miles northwest of Jerusalem. Cleopas, or Alpheus, the father of James the less, and another whose name is not known, being in conversation together on the road thither about the Saviour, the latter came along and fell in with them and traveled with them a considerable distance without their knowing him.

This interview was the more remarkable from the fact that he not only traveled with them and entered into conversation with them —and that, too, about himself and his own character and conduct as it had been exhibited to them recently—yet they did not know him. They knew indeed that he was "mighty" in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and they

felt their hearts burn within them, as it were, while they heard his remarks; and yet their eyes being holden, as the Scripture says, they did not recognize him.

Nor did they know him in fact till he came to sit down and eat with them; and then the veil which seems to have been over them was taken away. Having arrived at Emmaus, he had consented, at their request, to stop with them there, and tarry awhile; and when the supper came on, he proceeded to bless the bread in the usual manner, which opened their eyes. But no sooner did they behold him full before them, as the Saviour, than he disappeared.

Whether the two disciples had intended at first to pass the night in Emmaus, is not said; but they were so much surprised and overjoyed at the circumstance which had happened, that they went away directly to Jerusalem and announced the welcome intelligence to the eleven apostles that they had seen Jesus, while they heard from them also, at the same time, that he had appeared to Peter.

Where the apostles, except John, had been all this while, we are not informed; but they had been, it seems, so situated that they had

been readily drawn together by what had taken place, and were in consultation what to do.

Doubtless this interview, was a very joyful one to them all. The day which had now come to a close, had been the most eventful day of their lives; and they probably enjoyed the evening in talking over what they had seen and heard. The eleven were assembled, as it appears, in a very retired chamber; for, as the story was out, that they or the rest of the disciples had stolen the Saviour's body, and as their old fears that came upon them at Gethsemane and subsequently, were not yet probably all gone, they were disposed to hold their interview as secretly as possible.

Here, then, in this secret chamber, they were recounting the events and wonders of the day, with the doors closely shut, and I presume firmly fastened. They were taking some refreshment, and had probably nearly finished their repast, when, to their very great surprise and utter amazement, the Saviour, with the mighty power he had to pass bars and bolts, if he chose to do so, made his appearance in their midst, and with his usual familiarity said, "Peace be unto you." He

may have intended by it also to dispossess of fear, and calm their minds for the interview intended.

I have spoken of their surprise and amazement; but I might say more; they were exceedingly frightened; and from the manner of the Saviour's coming in, they appear to have regarded him, at first, as a spirit. But he soon calmed their fears by showing them —besides his salutation of peace—his hands, and feet, and side; and bidding them to test the reality of his presence by touching him. He also satisfied them still farther, by eating before them; for though, as I have already said, they had probably nearly finished their supper, yet on inquiry it appears they had left a small piece of fish and a little honey of which he partook as usual; thus convincing them that he had a real body, as much as before his death.

Before he left them—he seems to have been absent from them the week following—he gently complained to them of their unbelief and slowness to receive the abundant evidence which had been afforded them of his resurrection; but concluded his upbraidings with his usual kindness and forgiveness; and by

pronouncing, in a solemn but tender manner, the words, "Peace be unto you."

He also, at the same time, confirmed his former commission to them as apostles. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." It was, moreover, at the close of this interview, that he breathed on them, as the evangelist calls it, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" at the same time remitting their sins, and giving them power, as his apostles, to remit the sins of others.

I have spoken as if the eleven apostles were together at this interview; and yet it seems that Thomas was absent. When he returned, late in the evening, after the Saviour had retired, they told him Jesus had been there, and related the circumstance of their interview with him. But Thomas was still more incredulous than they had been. He said he would not believe he had risen, till he could actually examine, with his own fingers, the prints of the nails in his hands and feet. Is not such slowness of belief exceedingly unaccountable?

This interview of the Saviour with the ten apostles was on the evening of the first day of

the week, as I have already said; or, as we should call it, Sabbath evening.

In just a week afterwards, the apostles were again present together and Thomas with them. The doors being shut where they were and fastened as before, Jesus again appeared to them and with the same salutation as before, "Peace be unto you." And now it was, after having said this, that he approached the incredulous Thomas, and gave him the opportunity he had wished for. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands," said he, "and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing."

This was sufficient. Thomas could not resist the evidence of his senses. "My Lord and my God!" was the exclamation he made; after which, and a few remarks to him, gently reproaching him for his incredulity, the Saviour again disappeared.

It will be remembered, perhaps, that when the Saviour was, one day, while in Galilee, foretelling his sufferings and death, he told his disciples that he should not only rise again, but that after he had risen he would again meet them—"go before them," is the

Bible language—in Galilee. It appears also that he was to meet them there on a certain mountain; one, in all probability, with which they were familiar. It will likewise be remembered that the angelic messengers, in announcing his resurrection, adverted also to the same fact. It was not very long after his interview with the incredulous Thomas, that he appears to have set out on his journey thither.

His first interview with them there, was on the sea-shore—the sea of Galilee—rather than on the mountain. Peter, Thomas, James, John and two other apostles, accompanied by Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, were fishing there. While busily engaged, for once more, in this their old employment, the Saviour made his appearance on the shore; though they did not at first know him.

It was now morning, and about time for breakfast; and the Saviour, unknown to them either by his voice or manner, inquired if they had any thing to eat? They told him they had not; for though they had been toiling all night, they had not caught so much as fish enough for a single meal.

The Saviour, knowing their ill success,

directed them to cast their nets in a particular place and manner, and they would then meet with better success. He was soon recognized by Peter, and his directions being complied with, they caught such an abundance of fish, and of such an unusual size, that they could hardly drag them in. They, however, at length succeeded, and some of the fish being cooked at a fire which the Saviour had prepared on the shore, and a little bread being procured, they partook, with the Saviour, of a morning repast.

I have called the meal a morning repast, but the evangelist John calls it a dinner. Perhaps it was as late as ten or eleven o'clock in the forenoon; and if so they would naturally call it a dinner. The Jews, I believe, were accustomed to dine at eleven o'clock.

This was the third interview which the Saviour had with any considerable number of the apostles after his resurrection; and it was one of the most interesting and important which he ever had with them, if we except the hour of his ascension.

It was at this interview that he held a conversation with Peter about feeding his sheep and lambs; a conversation which we may be

sure Peter never forgot. In the same conversation, he foretold, rather indistinctly, the manner of that apostle's death; viz., by violence. The long life of John—the fact that he would live to witness the destruction of Jerusalem—for this was what was sometimes meant by Christ's coming—was also foretold at this same precious and interesting interview.

Soon after this, they had the meeting, already several times alluded to, on a mountain in Galilee. There are two reasons for supposing that the collection of people there was very large. 1. Because we are informed that some who were there worshiped him, while others doubted; whereas, we cannot believe that any doubts now lingered in the minds of the eleven apostles. 2. Because it is said in one of Paul's epistles, that the Saviour was on a certain occasion seen of above five hundred brethren at once; and I know not where this could have been, except in Galilee.

Within a little time after this meeting in Galilee, we find him in Jerusalem again, giving to his apostles and disciples, from time to time, various important instructions. He was with them, in the whole, after his resur-

rection, forty days, all of which time we may be assured was spent in the most profitable manner. It is true, the sacred record is silent in regard to the manner in which much of this time was spent, especially the first week; still, we cannot believe that the Son of God would misspend a single day or hour.

One thing which seemed to be a prominent topic in the Saviour's instruction, after his resurrection, was the interpretation of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and their application to himself. "Then opened he their understanding," it is said, in one instance, "that they might understand the Scriptures." Their understandings, however, after all, never were fully opened till subsequently to the Saviour's ascension to heaven; as we learn from the first chapter of Acts.

Among other things expressly enjoined by our Lord on his apostles, during his stay upon earth, was that they should do their utmost to extend the blessings of the gospel, not only to all nations of the earth, but to every individual. They were to preach and teach, or *discipher* and baptize; and in some circumstances, as it appears, to work miracles. They were to tarry in Jerusalem, however, a

short time, till the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter who was to be sent down after his own departure, to endue them with more special power from on high than they had yet received, and to assist, as it were, in completing the great work of redeeming and sanctifying the world.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Saviour and the apostles go to mount Olivet, near Bethany —Feelings of the apostles conjectured—Reflections on the Saviour's circumstances—He gives the apostles his parting blessing—He ascends—A cloud envelops him—Angelic directions—They return to Jerusalem—Further reflections.

The last journey the Saviour took on earth, was from Jerusalem to Bethany, or rather to the mount of Olives, which lay between Jerusalem and Bethany, and extended quite into the borders of the latter. In this journey he was accompanied by his apostles. He led them out, it is said, as far as to Bethany.

Did the apostles know that this was the last journey they were to take with their Lord

and Master, while on earth? They knew, unquestionably, that he would leave them soon; but did they know any thing of the day and hour? They had traveled with him many thousand miles, since they became his disciples; was this the last, the final walk?

I have sometimes thought whether the apostles might not have been at this time in expectation of some remarkable event; for it was, I believe, on their arrival at the place of his ascension, that some of them put to him the question whether he was about to "restore the kingdom to Israel." They could not even now wholly relinquish the idea that the Saviour was to be, somehow or other, and in some way or other, concerned in the restoration of the Jews to their ancient temporal privileges, as well as in blessing them spiritually; so strongly had their notions of a Messiah been tinctured with ideas of temporal power. Nor were they wholly unlike all other men in this respect. Who does not know how strongly affected human character is by the love of power?

It does not, however, appear very evident that they supposed this particular journey towards Bethany was to be their last in com-

pany with Jesus. Had they known, what must have been their feelings! They had been with him in comparative prosperity, as well as in adversity; they had seen him in hours of joy and in hours of sorrow; they had been with him in trials of the most distressing kind, and they had heard his instructions on almost every subject, till he was become endeared to them in a manner which, in all probability, can scarcely be conceived by us. True, they had deserted him in his last and most severe trials; and this must have stung them to the heart. Did the Saviour lead them out at the eastern gate of Jerusalem, and over the brook Kidron, and near the garden of Gethsemane, and up the ascent of mount Olivet, to the borders of Bethany, that with the last interview they might associate their ill treatment of him and their consequent ill desert, and thus be kept, in time to come, in proper humility?

But they are now arrived at the spot whence the Saviour is to take his flight from this dark world to bright, celestial regions. He is now to complete his course as a traveler on earth. No splendid, triumphant royal car, however,

awaits him; no retinue of attendants proposes to accompany him. He needs not, by whom the world was made, the aid of any of its chariots or horses, even those of fire! He needs not, who can command legions of cherubs and seraphs into his service, any convoy to the world of bliss—the heaven of heavens—his original, his eternal, his final abode. He needs nothing for his journey but his own power,—almighty power being his, in heaven and in earth.

Hitherto, for thirty years and more, has he been an inhabitant of a single corner of one little province of the Creator's vast domain. He has walked among the sons of men, and been himself a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. If his eyes have been raised at times to those bright worlds whence he came, still his more immediate intercourse has been with this world. Day after day, month after month, year after year, has seen him familiar with the abodes of poverty and ignorance, and of vice and crime; not to catch the disease, but to cure it. Wherever there has been imperfection or suffering, there has he been ready, with a warm heart,

and kind voice, and strong arm, to afford instruction or relief; usually both.

But the scene is soon to change. He is to travel a brighter and more cheerful road than any on this fallen earth. He is to be among suns and stars. He is to mount up to the heaven of heavens,—where he once was,—and seat himself, as before, on the eternal throne, at the right hand of the eternal Father.

His instructions are all given; his explanations to his disciples are all made. They are not, indeed, satisfied; but, having received full assurance that new light will be shed on them, a few days hence, by the power of the Holy Ghost, they are, on the whole, content to await the appointed time.

And now, for the last time, he lifts up his hands,—those hands which, though scarred with the accursed nails, have been the instruments of so much good, within the last three years,—and, in his usual solemn manner, commands a blessing upon them all, and commits them to the care of his and their most merciful Father.

But scarcely is the blessing pronounced, ere he begins to ascend! and make his way

through the thin air towards the skies. Solemn moment! Solemn to those who witness the scene,—solemn to us, even us, who, at this late day, in these ends of the earth, read of the event. He is fast disappearing—the clouds begin to envelop him—he can scarcely be seen—he is gone!

Even at this very moment, I seem to see the eleven companions of this ascending Saviour, with eyes upraised, and hands clasped, silent and motionless as the grave, watching the spot where he was last visible, vainly hoping to get one more distant glance at the object of their affections. But no. They may look while life lasts,—ay, for centuries. No Saviour will make his appearance in the skies any more, till the last trump shall sound, and the universe shall be arraigned at the final bar of judgment.

What must have been the sorrows—what the feelings in general—of the apostles of our Saviour, at this critical moment! Now, for the first time, as it were, in their whole lives, they were truly alone in the world. They had, indeed, been lonely before, as the world counts loneliness; but what loneliness like this? What could they now do? To

whom and where could they preach? Who would hear them? Who would receive them? Who would not even persecute them? And who would there be to sympathize with them in hours of trial and persecution?

They forgot, for the moment, it is presumed, the promise that he would send the Comforter. They forgot that they were to be endued, erelong, with power from on high. They forgot that the Saviour, though absent from them bodily, was to be with them spiritually, even to the end of their lives!

I presume, I say, that they forgot all this for a moment; such is human nature. But the scene soon changes. They are roused from their contemplation by two celestial messengers, robed in white, who give them great encouragement. "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" they say. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven."

This, I say, gave them courage; and, after worshiping the Saviour, they returned to Jerusalem. Their melancholy dejection was now fled away, and was succeeded by cheerfulness. Their sorrow was turned into joy.

Many a parent, at the spiritual departure of a child,—many a husband or wife, at the departure of a companion,—has felt for the moment that the world was to him or her a mere blank. "I have lost my child!" or, "I have lost my companion!" is the feeling, and sometimes the exclamation.

But the scene soon changes, especially if the bereaved mourner believes in the Saviour and the resurrection which he preached. That earthly friend, so dear and beloved, is regarded, not as *lost*, but only as gone before to a world which the survivor himself must soon enter. So was it with David. I shall go to my child, he said, but he will not return to me.

So was it, in a good measure, with the apostles. Jesus was not lost to them, as, in their first sorrowing moments, may have seemed to be the case. He was only gone before them. They had even higher hope of him than is had of an earthly friend. The child whom we love, or the companion of our bosom, will not, by-and-by, descend from the heaven of heavens, with a retinue of angels, to escort us thither. But Jesus will. When the last trump shall have sounded,—when

the earth and the sea shall have given up their dead,—when the living millions shall have been changed, and all shall have heard the final condemnation or reward, the righteous shall be caught up in the air,—so the Scripture expresses it,—to be for ever with their Judge, and Lord, and Master. He ascended alone to the blissful abode of his and our Father; we shall ascend in company. He made the tour of the visible heavens without splendor; but the tour which we shall make, when we ascend to dwell for ever at his right hand, will be in splendor, and glory, and pomp, and majesty inconceivable.

The Saviour has gone, but he is not lost. He still lives. He is still the same good and glorious Being that he always was. He is still promoting, as he always was, the highest possible happiness of all mankind. He still lives, I say. I might say much more. He still dwells with men. "Lo, I am with you alway," is still sounding in our ears; and the promise, unless we turn away from the voice that speaketh, is ours as much as it was that of the apostles. Jesus, though absent from us, is yet, in a certain sense, present to every one of his true followers.

He is not, indeed, an inhabitant, at the present time, of this vale of tears. He is not walking about in Palestine. He is not, as he once was, preaching in the temple at Jerusalem. He is not going from place to place, preaching, in person, to the poor the everlasting gospel. He is not feeding with temporal loaves and fishes the thousands who follow him to hear what he says and see what he does. He is not raising to life the temporally dead. He is not flying from the persecutions of the Jews. He is not at Gethsemane. He is not on Calvary.

But he still exists, as I have said. If he dwells with good men on earth, as we know there is a sense in which he does, yet he dwells in a more striking manner elsewhere. Let us not be over anxious to know the place or the mode of his existence. It is sufficient for us to know that he exists somewhere; and is always with his disciples wherever two or three only are gathered in his name; that he has a place for us, if we are indeed his disciples; that in his Father's house are many mansions, and that, be the mode of existence what it may, if we love him and continue in his love, we shall see him; if we are like him,

we shall be where he is, let the place be as it may. Where he is, as he expressly assured his followers, there they will be also. "Who worship God shall find him."

I have heard a few good men advance the idea that some of the glorious worlds which we call planets, into which sin, perhaps, has never entered, or that still more glorious world, the sun, or, perhaps, the other suns, called fixed stars, with which the visible firmament is studded, and with which the invisible is equally replete, might be the future abode of the redeemed of this world. It may, indeed, be so; though of this we know just about nothing at all. These speculations may be pleasant, even though they should not be profitable. Still I repeat once more—and it seems to me sufficient—the language of the poet, "Who worship God shall find him." Or the still more appropriate language of the Saviour himself, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you; that where I am there ye may be also."

The Saviour still lives. Not, however, as on earth, in poverty. The universe is now

his, and he uses it; both the world of matter and of mind. Is not he rich who has such absolute and illimitable sway,—who holds all beings and all property in his hands, and makes a glorious use of all?

He lives, and is eternally active. Not, indeed, in the way of walking about, confined to a body of flesh, and subject to infirmity. His is now a celestial body, that prevents not his flying from world to world with a speed to us inconceivable, in accomplishing purposes of infinite love and goodness.

He is still, I say, executing the purposes of his immeasurable love. He may be going about doing good, in some form or other, in some world or other, but his labors are not, as once, confined to Palestine. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his plans are as unlimited as his being is infinite.

He is not preaching now to the hundreds and thousands who once crowded to hear him. And yet his instructions, recorded in that blessed book of life, which his mercy and his providence have put into our hands, are spreading the everlasting gospel every day, among not only thousands, but millions; and

they are destined to reach hundreds of millions; yea, to embrace the whole human family.

I say the Saviour is not preaching now; and yet this is more than we can know. Mr. Dick, who has written many conjectures about the future state, supposes the Saviour may be employed, from time to time, without interference with his great work of intercession for us before the throne of his Father, in giving instruction in the form of lectures, or in some manner not unlike it, to countless myriads of celestial learners.

The Saviour is not now feeding with loaves and fishes, as once, the thousands whose temporal wants render his interference necessary. True, he gives us all, day by day, our daily bread; but not directly, nor in a miraculous manner. But he still gives us, as he always did, the bread of life, if we ever receive it. No person can come to God the Father, as the Saviour has expressly told us, even for common blessings,—much more for spiritual ones,—except through him.

He still causes the deaf to hear,—but it is those who are spiritually deaf. Bodily deaf-

ness, indeed, if curable at all, comes to pass through the medium of laws which God our Saviour has established. But the spiritually deaf are more directly operated upon, than those who are only deaf bodily.

He causes the blind to see. O, how many are blind to the requirements of God's law, as well as deaf to the voice which utters it! Yet there is here and there one, blessed be God, who can say, as did one of Palestine, in days of old, "Whereas I was blind, now I see."

The paralytic and the leper are still cured by the agency of our Saviour; but I refer here to those who are affected with the leprosy of sin, and whose moral powers are palsied by long disobedience to the laws of their Heavenly Father.

The dead are raised. How many who were once dead in trespasses and sins, have been quickened, through the agency and assistance of God's Holy Spirit, and through his mercy in Jesus Christ our Intercessor and Saviour, to rise to spiritual life and health, and to hope for a resurrection at the last day still more glorious!

The Saviour still lives; and because he lives, we, if we are his true followers, shall live also. Let us, then, boldly follow him, while the journey of life lasts, through good report and through evil, till the hour of our dissolution approaches; and then let us cross the dark valley of the shadow of death, still fearing no evil, till we arrive where he is, to dwell for ever in his blissful presence.

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